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OFFICE OF THE ... 20 DEC 1929 MADRAS

STRI DHARMA

Official Organ of the Women's Indian Association

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Madras Women's Conference *Frontispiece*

An All-Asian Women's Conference

World Sisterhood
By Margaret E. Cousins

Child Marriage Act and After
By T. R. Venkatarama Sastri

Infant Welfare in New Zealand

Tamil பாலிய விவாக மசோதாவின் வெற்றி.

Telugu స్త్రీల సమావేశము—మద్రాసు స్త్రీల [illegible]
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Stri Dharma.

Editor : Shrimati Malati Patwardhan, B.A.

Headquarters : Pantheon Gardens, Egmore, Madras.

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Women's Indian Association

OBJECTS

To present to women their responsibilities as daughters of India.

To secure for every girl and boy the right of Education through schemes of Compulsory Primary Education, including the teaching of religion.

To secure the abolition of child-marriage and to raise the Age of Consent for married girls to sixteen.

To secure for Women the vote for Municipal and Legislative Councils on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men.

To secure for Women the right to be elected as members on all Municipal and Legislative Councils.

To help Women to realise that the future of India lies largely in their hands : for as wives and mothers they have the task of training, guiding and forming the character of the future rulers of India.

To band Women into groups for the purpose of self-development and education, and for the definite service of others.

MEMBERSHIP

Women who agree and will co-operate with the Objects and Organization of the Association may become members. Groups of women having the same aims can be affiliated to the Women's Indian Association. Members are asked, but not obliged, to pay a subscription of twelve annas a year to the Headquarters of the Association.

Local Branches are self-governing and make their own arrangements.

ORGANIZATION

The Association, which has a central organization at the W. I. A. Headquarters, Pantheon Gardens, Egmore, Madras, was started on May 8, 1917, and has grown and increased steadily ever since. It now has 72 Branches, 23 Centres and over 4,000 members.

Branches are formed in every place where possible, with a local Secretary to arrange the work to suit local conditions and report to Headquarters.

The political policy of the Association is to work for Reforms through the Legislative Councils.

The aims and ideals and work of the Association are on a religious but non-sectarian basis.

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Dec 1928

THE FOURTH MADRAS CONSTITUENT WOMEN'S CONFERENCE ON EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL REFORM.

Lady Beatrix Stanley who opened the Conference (centre front row) and Mrs. M. E. Cousins, President of this Conference next to Lady Stanley and members of the Reception Committee.

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Notes and Comments.

Welcome to Mrs. Cousins.

We are happy at the return of Mrs. M. E. Cousins, our International representative after her recent world tour. Her impressions are given in an article "World Sisterhood" in this issue. She comes back to us with more understanding and greater enthusiasm after her knowledge of India's position in the outside world. We welcome her home in our midst very heartily and feel sure that she will help us in our movement of gaining our freedom wisely and enthusiastically. It is most urgent that at the present moment in India's history the women must keep alive in their hearts India's great destiny and help in realising it.

International Message of Goodwill for Indian Womanhood.

Mrs. M. E. Cousins as International Representative of the Women's Indian Association conveys to the women of India greetings of goodwill for them expressed by women's meetings and groups of representative women whom she addressed in France, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, England, Ireland, America, Canada, Honolulu, Japan and China.

The following is the text of the Resolutions passed by the Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom at its Council Meeting at Lyon:

'That this League welcomes the support of Indian women for Peace movements as expressed by Resolutions at their Madras Women's Day and Delhi League Meetings, and it also supports the demand of women in India for Self-Government." Proposed by Miss Pye (England) seconded by Mrs. Raymond (Holland) supported by Madame Baer (Germany) and Madame Brevet (France).

Also passed by Branches of this League in Philadelphia, New York (Inter-racial Branch), Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Boston, Chicago, New Haven, Swarthmore, San Francisco, Winnipeg.

A meeting in London of the British Commonwealth League for Equal Citizenship passed a Resolution of congratulation to the women of India on the satisfactory status of political enfranchisement they have gained and wished them success in their movements for social reform and self-government.

From Tokyo, Japan,

"We, the undersigned, send hearty greetings to the women of India and congratulate them on securing woman suffrage. We are of one mind with you in your desire and effort to bring reform in the educational system in your country both for boys and girls."

Dr. Mrs. Yayoi Yoshioka, President, Women's Medical Association and Principal Women's Medical College.

Miss Shigi Tokenaka, Journalist, Tokyo "Morning Sun".

Miss Ichikawa, The Women's Suffrage League.

Mrs. Gauntlett, Director Japan Peace Association. "Vice-President, W.C.T.U.

Miss Toki Nishigama, Girl's High School.

Mrs. Kame Watasa. Anti-Vice Association.

Miss Casey, Theosophical Society.

Mrs. Taeko Miyazuki, W.C.T.U.

Women in India Conference.

We take the following from the *Manchester Guardian*:

The waters of the conference were troubled again to-day. Miss Katherine Mayo's book, *Mother India*, has undoubtedly greatly stimulated the interest British women take in the problems of their Indian sisters and their desire to help, but advanced Indian women resent her attitude so deeply that they distrust everyone who seems to take her seriously.

Because he was quoted in *Mother India* an attempt was made to challenge Dr. Lancaster, the author of a book on tuberculosis in India, who spoke of his thirty years in India as the happiest years of his life and of his love for the people. Tuberculosis was, he said, a terrible scourge in India, causing great loss of life. It affected women in India much more than men, especially the Purdah women, and more especially the young married women who underwent the trials of maternity at a very early age. He begged the Indian women present to take up voluntary service for their own people and to do all in their power to influence public opinion for the gradual alteration of the social conditions that are unfavourable to maternal health. "Acquaint yourselves," he said, "with the essential rules of health and spread them abroad."

The main reason for the strong feeling shown by the Indian women seemed to be that Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., who presided, and who

had been one of the two people responsible for making the conference arrangements, had published last year a pamphlet entitled "Has Katherine Mayo slaughtered India?" The bitterness caused by this was expressed by one of the most brilliant of the Indian women, Mrs. Rama Rao, in the course of an intensely interesting speech on the Child Marriage Bill. Mrs. Rama Rao had told how for a hundred years the evils of child marriages had been attacked by advanced Indian thinkers, and how in the last few years all the organised women of the country had carried on a spiritual campaign for legislation to make it illegal.

She explained the impossibility of individuals setting their faces against a custom that was supported by their communities and how essential it was to secure legislation. The women had won the battle and they were proud of the struggle they had been through. Then she spoke of the special difficulty Indian reformers have to face, the need of conciliating the orthodox while pressing for reforms. English women could afford to snap their fingers at convention but Indian women must go carefully. Then she asked how far they could depend on the moral support of the women of this country.

This conference, called by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship and attended by representatives of 18 other societies, impressed the English visitors as being rather too informal. The final arrangements had been hurried forward and some of the representatives complained that no copies of the resolutions to be considered had been sent to them. They had therefore come with no instructions from their societies as to how they should vote. The Indian women complained that they had not been consulted when the programme had been drawn up. In the circumstances it seemed that the conference was purely consultative.

But the Indian women took it very seriously and Mrs. Rama Rao said "Are the British women here prepared that we should say to our organisations in India that a British Women's Conference was called in London, having for its organisers two British women, one of whom Miss Rathbone, has published a pamphlet jutsifying Miss Katherine Mayo's book?" She wished to quote from the pamphlet but Miss Rathbone would not allow it and said it was entirely irrelevant to the subject. There was some heated discussion. Lady Simon interposed to say she wished Mrs. Rama Rao would continue the interesting speech, and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence said Mrs. Rao's point about the complete misunderstanding in this country as to the Indian women's movement and its wonderful progress in India was very important.

Mrs. Rao, continuing, said she did not attach any value to the pamphlet, but she wished to protest against the conduct of the confer-

ence and the fact that the Indian members had not had a fair hearing. They had welcomed conferences of this nature. She acknowledged that the British women were animated by goodwill and sympathy, but she added, "For goodness sake create a better understanding if you wish to help us. You cannot help us without understanding".

India dissociates Herself.

(*The following is a letter sent to the English Press, in connection with the Conference on 'Women in India' where Mrs. B. Rama Rao upheld the true-spirit of India. An account of this Conference appears in this issue*—Editor).

The Lyceum Club,
138, Piccadilly,
London, W. 1.
October 11th, 1929.

We, the representatives of the voluntary Women's Organisations in India, would be very much indebted to you if, in the cause of fair play, you will kindly publish this letter:

A Conference on "Women in India" was held at The Caxton Hall on the 7th & 8th October under the auspices of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, presided over by Miss Rathbone, M.P., when 25 British Women's Organisations were represented.

At the opening of the Conference, in spite of Indian delegates being present, the chairwoman made it perfectly clear that it was a Conferenc of British women only and that Indian women were there in the capacity of experts to report on the work of Women's Organisations in India. A question was raised quite early regarding the composition of the Committee responsible for the programme and the resolutions. The Chair confessed that the Committee was "a very valuable and workable Committee, a Committee of two—namely, Miss Caton and myself." Since the resolutions all urge voluntary Societies to carry out certain measures in the interests of reform, it is only natural that the representatives of these Societies should enquire into the credentials of those who offer their help. A close scrutiny reveals that the more important of this "üseful Committee of two", Miss. E. Rathbone, had some months previously written an article, published in the Hibbert Journal, supporting Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, which since then the office of the "Women of India—Proposed Survey" has published in pamphlet form for distribution.

It is common knowledge that no voluntary Men or Women's Organisations in India, religious or non-religious, will identify them-

selves with the supporters and apologists of Katherine Mayo and if the "Office of the Women of India, Proposed Survey" lends its authority to pamphlets of this nature, we, the representatives of voluntary efforts in India, dissociate ourselves completely from the work of the said Office and its organisers.

When at the Conference the Indian representatives drew attention to these facts and many irregularities of procedure, they were ruled out of order. No mention of or reference to the pamphlet was allowed. Are we to take this as proof that its author is ashamed of her publication?

It is truly regrettable that at this critical time, when representative Indian women in London are desirous of establishing friendly relations with the British Women's Organisations, they should be treated in this high-handed and unsympathetic way. The British Societies supporting this Conference should therefore not be surprised if in India the Women's Organisations have little or no confidence in this proferred hand of friendship. We have had too many enemies in the guise of friends and do not mean to take any more risks. Some of us may realize the sincerity behind this effort but the tactlessness and the unconstitutional manner in which the whole proceedings were conducted, combined with Miss Rathbone's public and private support of Katherine Mayo, will naturally be taken into consideration by Women's Societies in India.

We remain,
Yours faithfully,

T. Bhada, B. P. Byramji, E. B. Benjamin,
K. Chatterjee, P. Dastur, D. Jinarajadasa,
B. Kotval, A. J. Matthai, N. Motivala,
C. Mukerjee, N. Palit, B. Rama Rao,
M. Sen, L. Singh, H. Sen,
D. Thaper.

Two Letters.

The following two letters received from Mr. Haribilas Sarda and Mr. M. R. Jayakar acknowledging the resolution that was passed by a meeting of women in Madras expressing their feelings of happiness at the passing of the Child Marriage Prevention Bill and thanking all those who had helped:

I thank you sincerely for your telegram in September at Simla and your letter of 4th October, 1929. I have just returned from the North Western Frontier where I was touring with the Primary Education Committee and hence the delay in sending you a reply.

I am grateful to you for the resolution of thanks passed at a meeting of the Women's Indian Association recently. I am particularly grateful to you for your timely telegram sent to me at Simla saying that millions of girls would be married in 1930 if the Child Marriage Act would come into force on 1st January, 1931. That telegram was very useful to me in persuading Government not to insist that the law should come into force on 1st January, 1931.

I thank you for all the assistance given to me in getting the Bill passed. But, may I say that the struggle has only begun and the women of India have to be up and doing and fighting battles now. Mr. Acharya, and Mr. Ramachandra Iyer in Madras (even Mr. Satyamurti) are agitating in your presidency and the women must start a counter propaganda at once.

I would also ask you to get up meetings to support my Hindu Widows' Inheritance Bill which I was able to introduce in the Assembly on 26th September, 1929. Thanking you again.

HARBILAS SARDA.
Yours sincerely,

I am in receipt of the copy of the resolutions which were passed at a meeting organised by the Women's Indian Association thanking all those who have helped in the passing of the Child Marriage Bill. Please convey to your Association my thanks for their appreciation of the humble work I did in connection with the passing of that bill. I need hardly add that I am always at the disposal of the Women's Indian Association for the work of carrying out reform in the laws relating to women's rights. It is possible that you are aware that I have given notice of three bills which were introduced in the last session of the Legislative Assembly, which will considerably affect women's rights in matters of marriage, inheritance and adoption. I shall require the support of your association in favour of those bills.

Yours faithfully,
M. R. JAYAKAR.

The First Girl Matriculate from Gwallior.

We wish to congratulate Srimati Indumati Raje Rajwade, daughter of H.H. The Chief of Sangli and the daughter-in-law of Raja General G. R. Rajwade of Gwalior. We are told that this beautiful and charming young princess is the first girl to matriculate from Gwalior. We feel sure that she will do much useful work in her own sphere of life, which, we hope, as years pass, will extend to a larger and a wider field of activity.

Greetings from Madras Women.

We, the women of Madras, assembled at the Madras Constituent Conference of Women, thank the Members of the Women's International League and other societies for their very kind messages to us conveyed through Mrs. Cousins and Mr. Guru Saday Dutt.

We desire to send our cordial greetings and good wishes to our sisters the members of these societies.

We heartily join them in their belief of Universal Brotherhood and Sisterhood and assure them of our co-operation in promoting friendly understanding and sympathy between the women of England, America and other parts of the world and India.

We welcome your co-operation and help in our struggle to free ourselves from all social evils and customs and become one united nation with undivided aims.

All India Educational Conference.

During the last quarter of this year many constituencies will be holding their conferences to pass resolutions and elect delegates to be sent to the All India Conference to be held in Bombay from January 20th to the 24th, 1930. Compulsory primary education must be our next step towards the progress necessary before we can intelligently use our freedom. The passing of the Child Marriage Prevention Bill removes the greatest obstacle in securing the necessary freedom for boys and girls to attend school. Now that we will have millions of girls and boys free, we should, with as great an enthusiasm as was shown in raising the age of marriage, work for gaining compulsory education for every one of them.

Congratulations.

We congratulate and welcome Miss Anusuya Paranjpe and Mrs. Malati Kelkar on their gaining the Montessori diploma in London this year. They have just returned after an inspiring contact with Madame Montessori during her lectures and demonstrations in the real understanding of the method. They have visited many schools in England and the Continent and we feel sure that with this experience they will evolve a suitable scheme for training young children here, the spirit of Madame Montessori's methods. Mrs. Malati Kelkar has returned to her work in the Theosophical Girls' School, Benares and Miss Anusuya Paranjpe is appointed by the Gwalior Government to start a Montessori School in the present Sirdar School there. We wish these two young sisters a life of usefulness in their vocation.

An All-Asian Women's Conference.

Each Continent of the world has its own distinctive characteristics. Europe,—Asia,—America—what different feelings they call up in our minds! Asia, which contains more than half the population of the world, is utterly different from Latin and Teutonic Europe, or futurist young, America. Each has its gift for the world. Each must retain its individuality for the enrichment of human unity.

The world "oriental" best expresses the quality of Asia. It calls up quietness, simplicity, agriculture rather than industrialism, arts and crafts rather than mass factory production, a realisation of Time stretching behind and before in aeons, an ever-present sense of a world of the spirit interpenetrating this world of the senses, poverty, pain, poise, patience, peace.

In the extremes of honour and of serfdom accorded to its Womanhood Asia is one. In its worship of the Family, in the hopes of the here and the hereafter that it places in the Child, in its marriage codes, in its illiteracy, in its present renaissance Asia is one. It has messages concerning the sanctity of life; the vocation of woman as race nourisher; ideals of art, philosophy and spirituality of a complementary nature to the views on these subjects entertained by other continents. None hold this oriental culture more tenaciously, more authentically than its women. But the Chinese woman sees more of her American sister than on her Burmese neighbour, the Hindu woman knows more of her British sister than of her Mesopotamian or Afgan relative.

The tides of Western influence are pouring in on the oriental woman from all sides. They are already putting a modernist veneer over Japan. They have swept away cultural landmarks of Turkestan women. They seek to cast a glamour over India. The power to sift what is essential, what is appropriate for Asia from this surging life can only be wisely gained if ASIA AS ASIA *gets together to review her own uniqueness, if she takes stock of her own assets of civilisation.*

How can Asia's gifts be preserved? By bringing together the closest custodians of her inherent life, the women of Asia, that they may discuss their own cultural problems, and through a better knowledge of their fundamental differences from women of other lands may the more valuably be able to solve their difficulties, appreciate at its legitimate value the interchange of gifts from other lands and through keener appreciation of human relationships

be the better fitted to preserve the peace of the world. It is essential that they meet face to face to know their common heritage, so that they may become self-conscious of the spiritual gifts with which they can serve the world.

The women of India have already experienced the inspiration of gathering together from all parts of India, and have realised the power of united service of the needs of this country. The women who met at the Women's Pan-Pacific Conference in Honolulu joined the hands of East and West. Women of Europe have many times rejoiced in their solidarity. The women of the Americas made vital contacts in their Pan-American Conference—but Asia lags behind in unified self-consciousness.

Cannot Bharatamata, Mother India, the foster mother of Asia's cultures, the caravanserai of Islam from the West, of the Aryan from the north, of the Buddhist returning from the East, cannot she call her daughters to her shores so that in a joint family they may review their oriental qualities and defects; organise the first for their own and world service; strengthen one another by understanding, knowledge of data, interchange of experience; remedy the evils of their illiteracy, their high death-rate, their infant mortality, their unequal national status. Such a union of Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Burmese, Indian Javanese, Afghan, Tibetan, Arabian, Persian, Turkish, Jewish and other Asian women can be brought together if a loving, wise, call to unity is sent forth bravely, strongly, unselfishly. Through such a Conference of Asian women more easily than in any other way can oriental gifts of spiritual consciousness, the fundamental value of the family, the holiness of Motherhood, the restfulness of simplicity, the happiness of unselfish service, be organised and made available for the helping of humanity.

Shall not we awakened and unified women in India invite the representatives of all the Asian family to meet in this focal, magnetic point of Asia as soon as possible? Honolulu will see another Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in August 1930, *and in China in* 1932. *Let us plan for an All-Asian Women's Conference for* 1931.

World Sisterhood.

By Margaret E. Cousins.

The privilege and honour of acting as the International Representative of the Women's Indian Association since I left India eighteen months ago carried also with it the responsibility of meeting as many representative groups of women as possible in the various countries through which I passed during my just completed tour round the world.

Since I left India I have addressed over one hundred and fifty meetings of various Women's Associations in Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland, London, Ireland, America, Winnipeg (Canada) Honolulu, Japan, China, and Singapore, giving the greeting of the awakened women of India to their sisters in all these lands.

It has been a joy to publish everywhere the tidings of the entire equality of political status with men which Indian women now possess. Everywhere I found people interested in the condition of India. Almost all were in the dark about Indian matters. The specialised view-point of Christian missionaries, the political and commercial vested interests of England, the exaggerations and untruths of "Mother India" have all combined to draw generalised pictures of India so false, so damaging to its reputation that I often found myself flaming in passionate revolt again the questions that were put to me. I used to wonder why the evils that are found in every country were made reasons why India only was considered too degraded, degenerate, and unfit for self-government. This was unjust specially because there are splendid Indian women Legislative Councillors, over a hundred women municipal and Local Government Board members, and eighty women magistrates, while in Switzerland and France, women have not even the vote, and in Japan women may not attend political meetings nor join any political associations and they hardly have any legal standing.

When one has reviewed humanity with love in one's heart, and the attitude of finding the best everywhere in one's mind, the world gives one a strong sense of progress, awakening, evolution. The method of evolution, the details through which the onward march of humanity demonstrates itself are immensely varied and interesting but all the world moves forward as a unity and womanhood is no-

where left behind. Indeed the more I study of life the more I realise that woman is at the centre of the wheel of life, and not at the circumference. It is because the expression of womanhood in Europe is along the line of charm, attractiveness, diplomatic subtlety, home influence, and that of womanhood in America shows itself as independence, self-reliance, economic power, and that of the womanhood of Asia as service of the family, conservation, and religion that these three continents may similarly thus be generalised as to their respective characteristics.

The function of motherhood with its joys and its pains is a fundamental bond of unity which makes all women of one kin, all sisters in sorrow or song. In the United States only a fully qualified *woman Doctor* is allowed by law to deliver each newly born babe, nurses there of three years' training and with midwifery certificates are not considered sufficiently skilled for the most important health service in the world—that of the accoucheurs. These American women consequently are deeply pained and compassionate when they hear of the inadequacy of medical help available for their Indian sisters. They have learnt that the benefits of widespread and thorough education bring happiness, health, and freedom to women and they sent through me at every meeting at which I spoke messages of support for the demand of India for self-government so that India can get control directly of its own finances to apply them for the spread of knowledge and the reduction of diseases and infantile mortality. Such resolutions were passed particularly by the branches of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom in such important cities as Philadelphia, New York, Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, Winnipeg, Pittsburg, to mention only a few. Many of the Women's Guilds of the Co-operative Society around London have passed similar resolutions which show that they also understand the needs of India.

This was my first visit to America and many aspects of its life have impressed me deeply and favourably. The women at the meetings I addressed showed intense interest in the collection of photographs of Indian life I had brought with me and the collection of lantern slides made from our snapshots. The tangible evidence of sight seems to clinch all the facts, figures and arguments I had used.

American women are born organisers. They are well on the way to the achievement of as great sex loyalty to one another as is such a characteristic of men. This has arisen from the conditions of their lives in this way:—Every girl gets a good education until she is at least fourteen, a large proportion going right on through college.

During that time they get instruction in group organisation, in public speaking, in details of leadership. When they take up home life the cost of servants is so great that only the rich employ them. So the care of the house-hold falls on these well-educated, freedom-loving girls, but their houses, however small, are so well-equipped with labour-saving devices of electricity, gas, water, ice-boxes, telephones, and countless gadgets that these women evolve a technique of housework that leaves them a number of hours daily which they devote to self-culture, recreation or social service. This is largely secured by the women in the locality joining together as a women's club, or a women's association for some special object. They first rent a place of meeting but after some sessions of well chosen programmes of lectures, entertainments, study, or social service, they then collect funds and build their own club house, with apartments in it for women in business or strangers to the town, rooms for renting to societies, a public restaurant, a public gymnasium and swimming bath, and sub-sections for varied groups of women. All this immense activity and business management is carried on by women only for women only. Some women's clubs have thousands of members and own property worth millions of dollars. It is the home women who are the bulk of these club women. It was all quite new to me in this advanced stage of power and prosperity and permanence. They carry out important sections of social welfare work such as care of the needy, garden clubs, city beautification, peace propaganda, or art ventures. They make splendid yearly programmes of lectures, luncheons, entertainments, paying large fees to secure the most famous speakers of all nationalities, and these programmes are arranged nine months in advance. Intellectual curiosity is a marked characteristic of American women. Our brilliant Srimati Sarojini Devi Naidu was engaged by dozens of these women's clubs and astonished the American women by her genius, oratory and the knowledge she conveyed to them about the history and ideals of India, past and present. It was a great happiness to me to see the triumphant effect she made, not for herself but for India, on a Luncheon audience of 1,700 people in New York under the auspices of the Foreign Policy Association. Sarojini Devi is a member of the world sisterhood of whom every woman may feel proud. She and I can bear testimony to the unstinted kindness and hospitality shown to us by every type of American woman.

There is one motor car in the United States for every three people, and you feel that the American women can drive a motor car better than they can sew or darn their stockings. I felt at first entirely behind the times in America becasue I could not act as chaffeur. I felt so old-

fashioned that I could hardly look my American sisters in the face. Even little girls there manage big cars in crowded traffic and old ladies of over seventy think nothing of driving off alone to distant places. Fortunately before I left California a friend kindly and bravely allowed me to use her Whippet car and I was duly instructed by an American sister motorist of so varied talent that she played the harp, sang Negro Spirituelle songs, painted pictures, and did all her own housework and cooking. I held my head high again before I left Los Angeles as the proud possessor of a licence from a Californian district court to "operate a motor car."

A five days' stay in Honolulu gave me the opportunity of meeting the officials of the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference. I spoke at a Luncheon of the Pan-Pacific Union Club and thus acted as a belated representative of India to build into the remarkable compendium of information that Honolulu has compiled about the Far Eastern women the facts of life in the mother country of Asian culture, the good news of India's renaissance, especially in its effect on women's lives. One of the most valued new friendships of my tour was that which I made with Mrs. Swanzy, the chairwoman of the reception committee of the Women's Conference, a woman of vision, power, motherliness and internationalism.

Everything in Japan is so different from all my former experience that I felt as if I had been transported to a new planet. Every boy and girl in Japan is compelled to go to school for at least nine years and the sight of immense school buildings everywhere, filled with happy children, made me very envious. I longed for the time when India will have the same State support and facilities for mass education. I found the Japanese girls fascinating. They are extremely pretty and dainty. Their dress, the kimono, with its curious and wide sash, has the most varied of colours and designs, but always in perfect taste. They do not wear hats but arrange their hair most elaborately and artistically. Their marriages are usually made by the parents or the professional match maker, but not until the girl is over eighteen. Many girls go into business offices, act as bus conductors, become teachers and nurses between sixteen and twenty-one. I saw many young women riding bicycles, the kimono seeming to be in no way unsuitable, but I did not see a single woman driving a motor car. Though in general life the Japanese women seem free in every way their leaders told me there are many reforms necessary. The oldest man in each joint family is the supreme ruler of the destinies of all the women of the family. Amongst the Buddhists I think there must be more equality of respect shown to women for Buddhists

nuns told me that they have exactly the same temple and individual rights as the men monks or bhikkus. The education arranged for girls after the primary schools is of a lower standard than that given to boys and this makes great difficulties for those girls who wish to enter professions. It also prevents women from acting in any of the higher grade posts. An illustration is that out of over 2,000 head teachers of primary schools only four are women. But the Japanese women are wide awake and are agitating to gain adequate legal and political status. Amongst the group of representative women who entertained me in Tokyo one was a woman doctor, principal of a women's medical college which has graduated 4,000 women doctors, and which organises very large and important schemes of training midwives; another was a talented journalist in charge of the large women's section of a newspaper which has a daily circulation of three millions. Others were leaders of Women Suffrage, Temperance, Children's Playgrounds, Anti-Vice movements. I felt that Indian women could influence Japanese progressive women more wisely and more in accordance with their oriental natures than the American women whom they are following almost by imitation at present. I felt the same in the case of the delightful Chinese women I met.

It was the day I landed in Tokyo, Japan, that I read the cabled news from India that Haribilas Sarda's Child Marriage Bill had been passed with splendid majorities in both Assembly and Council of State. My happiness over this historic and humane step coloured my visit to Japan and gave me cause for rejoicing all the long voyage home to India. Readers of STRI DHARMA will like to know that I have secured at least two subscribers to this magazine in each of the countries I visited. The reports of the Women's Education Conference, the reports of the Women's Indian Association, and copies of *STRI DHARMA* have been invaluable to me as propaganda of the progressive movements of women in India.

There are gifts of the spiritual life that the women of India predominantly possess for the enrichment of the world sisterhood. I know this for certain now since I have contacted women right round the globe. But in order to develop those gifts India must get self-government immediately so that education may be widespread and suitable, and women must use the instrument of *organisation* to the full—that organising union which is strength.

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Sarda's Child Marriage Prevention Act and After.*

By T. R. Venkatarama Sastri.

Harbilas Sarda's Bill has now been passed by the Assembly and the Council of State, and, I may now add, has become law by the assent of the Viceroy. It has roused feeling in the country as no other bill has ever done before. But those who opposed Sarda's Bill in its original form must now regret their opposition to it, because it was much less obnoxious to their sentiment than the Bill as passed.

It may be recalled that the original Bill fixed the minimum age of marriage at fifteen and twelve. In its desire to conciliate conservative opinion, it provided that permission for marriage at eleven may be granted in exceptional cases. Marriages below the minimum age were declared invalid. The objection to the Bill was that it made marriages invalid ignoring the indissoluble character of Hindu marriages. But if marriages below eleven immediately ceased, as there was every reason to suppose that it would have, no hardship could have been caused to anybody. But the opponents of the Bill at that time were thinking only of their theoretic objection to all legislation on the topic of marriage and not of the practical wisdom of stopping legislation at a point convenient to themselves. The result is that the passing of the Bill was delayed, opinion on the other side stiffened, and the Bill underwent transformation in its present form.

Harbilas Sarda had only a limited object in view, the prevention of widowhood at tender ages of girls. He left the attainment of higher ages before marriage to the growth of public opinion and passed the age of consummation by as really a matter for a different piece of legislation; and he showed great consideration to popular prejudice against post-puberty marriages. If this Bill had been passed, the provision for permission to marry at eleven being omitted as unnecessary, marriages below twelve would have immediately ceased; popular clamour, which was never very serious as regards the fixing of twelve, would have quieted down; the ground gained would have been easily consolidated and in a few years, the country might have thought nothing of the raising of the age of marriage still further if it was

*The Indian Review.

deemed necessary. The Bill, as passed, practically enjoins and enforces post-puberty marriages and therefore threatens to raise a hornet's nest.

My mind moved along the same line as that of the author of the Bill. I did not feel quite at ease in applying coercion in this topic of legislation. Beneficent social legislation has to my mind certain limits which ardent reformers seem to me not sufficiently to recognise. It is not enough that the object of legislation is in itself worthy, but the people concerned should either positively recognise. It is not enough that the object of legislation is in itself worthy, but the people concerned should either positively recognise it as worthy or should at least be indifferent in regard to it. Antipathy of any considerable section should be avoided. Social legislation, to be useful and effective, may be a little in advance of conservative opinion but must not be pushed too far to secure acquiescence in the last resort. These were the ideas which made me suggest that marriages below twelve may be made voidable. The conservatives stood out against all legislation. The reformers have gone beyond what might with some grumbling have been accepted by the orthodox. And the Bill has become law. The question for those who were opposed to this piece of legislation is, what should they do?

It is not the part of wisdom to put yourself into a rage and threaten to try conclusions with the law. Frankly speaking, we are none of us living under the regime of ideas that make post-puberty marriages an inexpiable sin. In the family of each of us or in the families of those who are nearly related to us, there have been marriages in recent years at fourteen, fifteen and even sixteen, well-known, if not acknowledged, to be post-puberty marriages which have not put the parties or their relations outside the pale of decent society. None of us can or will agree to boycott them or put them out of caste. If economic or other difficulties in the way of earlier marriages are recognised in these cases as sufficient justification for adopting a secondary or *apatkalpa*, the legislative provision will be sufficient to exculpate them before any tribunal of this or the next world exercising spiritual jurisdiction. I am of course assuming that none of us has reason to push our dislike to the legislative measure to the extent of daring and incurring its penalties. If any one feels it so much that he would much rather break the law and incur the punishment than postpone the marriage, there is no arguing with him. But to those who recognise that what goes on around us does not justify our putting ourselves in a mood of rebellious dissatisfaction, it will not be in vain to appeal that it is not worth while. The spirit of the times is in the direction of

pushing up the age of marriage, and the next generation will be wholly unable to understand the extreme emotion of this generation in the matter.

If I am to speak out my mind frankly, the legislation is going to give the true *dharma-sastra* a chance of acceptance once again by the people of this land.

Before I explain myself, let me say this. I pass by the plea for the acceptance of pre-puberty marriage as a world ideal, because it can only invite the ridicule of the whole world. Pre-puberty marriage is not prescribed for any except a small class even in this land, and to talk of pre-puberty marriage as India's ideal offered for the acceptance of the world is to invite the just rejoinder that that small class is thinking only of itself all the time that it talks of India. Again I pass by the absurd and thoughtless talk of the imperilment of chastity because those who talk thus will be the very first to disown any idea of casting aspersions on the vast majority of Indians who live under the system of post-puberty marriages and are not the less pure on that account. Those great and noble heroines whose deeds are enshrined in our epics and puranas and who are held up to admiration to this day as ideals and exemplars for all time were among those who married after puberty.

I do not consider fourteen to be a late age for marriage at all. I do not think that unless parents are oppressed by a sense of duty to marry their girls before puberty, they would lose all sense of duty to arrange for the marriages of their children. I do not think that female children are going to throw off the guidance and control of their parents any more than male children are throwing off such guidance and control now. I do not think there will be girls refusing to marry after fourteen any more than there are boys now refusing to do so. I apprehend no calamity from the change in the law. The truth is that human nature accustomed to an institution however unreasonable or injurious or oppressive cannot think of altering it without apprehending all sorts of trouble from the change. It is the primitive fear of the unknown as compared with the known even where the known is recognised to be fraught with evil.

The true shastra is that until consummation, there is no marriage and no widowhood; but after the *saptapadi* ceremony, consummation must follow in time if both should be alive. Bound by the irrevocable ceremony, they entered the state of matrimony *on* consummation. If death intervened and snapped the bond and consummation did not follow, the virgin, was fit for marriage again with another, and her

children were in no sense inferior to the children of mothers who took the seven steps only with one man in their lives.

Not even the morbid and hysterical *smriti* writers, who, in intemperate language unworthy of sages, heaped curses and unnameable penalties on those who did not marry their girls before puberty, have made the woman that had gone through the *saptapadi* ceremony, without consummation following it, the widow of the man who had taken her hand in marriage. It was left to us of these later times, in our devastating logical-mindedness, to make a widow of her. If we could go back to those ancient broadminded law-givers who knew human nature and allowed for its imperative needs and saw no *sin* in post-puberty marriage, we may even now settle marriages at twelve and honestly carry them out at fifteen *or* sixteen, and derive all the advantages that flow from the attitude of mind which recognises a tie irrevocably determined on and to be carried out in due time.

Hindu Law Research and Reform.

The following is an extract from the Presidential Address delivered by the Hon'ble Justice G. D. Madgavkar at a Conference of the All-India Hindu Law Research and Reform Association of Poona.

"There are several questions which the Sphinx of the day poses to every thinking Hindu. Does the strength of a community depend on its total numbers alone and on the numbers of its castes or do quality, discipline, scientific and accurate thought and organization count for more? Does the strength of a religion lie in the multitude of its goods and the extent of its mythological lore or rather in its simplicity and its appeal to love faith and charity to all mankind and its practical working in life and Society? Is the excellence of a Code to be judged by the number, complexity and minuteness of its laws and their admixture with ritual and theology and the subtlety and number of its text books and commentaries or rather by simplicity, elasticity within the measure of well-defined principles, adaptation to existing social facts and their influence in raising the social standard? We all deplore the lack of progress—it might even be called degeneration—from which we have been suffering from centuries. An orthodox Hindu statesman, Sir T. Madhavarao opined half a century ago that there was no society which suffered so much from self-inflicted evils as Hindu Society. The causes are patent: extreme conservatism, lack of prespective, reluctance to face realities, attempts to work round difficulties by metaphysical casuistry and legal subtleties, inability to adapt ourselves to altered environment, stubborn pride in the past with insufficient thought of present and future—all these, most of us are agreed, are the root causes. It is this which causes a large number of us to shirk the work of reform. And it is not merely from the Shastris and Pandits but too often those least versed in our ancient laws that the outcry proceeds of sacrilege and of religion in danger whenever any proposal of reform is mooted.

What is to be our reply to this attitude? The answer is in my opinion plain. If the wisest legislators in any country were to be asked to-day to frame laws which would be suited to the conditions of their country centuries hence, an attempt at compliance would be thought only one degree more rash than the request itself. The unbending conservative attitude of worship of our ancient legislators

reflects not credit upon them so much as discredit upon ourselves. Reverence is one thing; blind worship is quite another. To the lawyer at least it should be plain that the laws of Manu are neither more nor less sacrosanct than the laws of Solon or the Twelve Tables. Justinian, Gaius, Blackstone, and Coke are names which command reverence and not only in their own times and countries. But that is not to say that their words are for all time the last word in legislation, however society might alter. The Fascists have restored the Roman Salute; they have not restored the Pandects.

In true reverence to our ancient legislators we yield to none. We appreciate the hoary antiquity of our society, its laws and institutions; and while we are not opposed to reform or change as such, neither are we revolutionaries anxious for a change for its own sake, or unless it is a change for the better. It is therefore that we couple reform with research. We welcome all the light possible on the principles of our ancient legislation and its varying applications in different provinces and to different castes. And we can also point out the changes which, even in ancient times, are to be found in legislation. It is only when we find that the social structure has so altered that the existing law results in consistent hardship not contemplated by ancient principles and legislators and that the proposed reform will result in improvement—it is only on these conditions that we can set our hands to a change. In short, we recognise that the Hindus are no longer the isolated community they were in those ancient times and that now even Hindu Society is not static but dynamic. Like other societies it must in course of time come forward or lag behind. We desire that it should progress. If we find our laws crystallising and favouring those institutions which have decayed and which prevent progress, we conceive it our duty to strive to alter them in the right direction. As to the rate of progress, opinions may reasonably differ. As to the direction there need be no serious difference of opinion.

The joint family system for instance is a peculiar variation of the ancient patriarchial family to be found in ancient Rome, Greece and other countries. It assumes several basic factors; a simple state of society, in the main agricultural, with enough spare land available for the increase in the family and for it to throw offshoots by emigration, a strong tie of family affection in all and particularly reverence and obedience towards the head, woman, with the exception perhaps of the woman at the head, accepting throughout her life a subordinate position, content to live and develop entirely within the sphere of the family. Most if not all these factors are tending to

disappear, particularly in the large towns. As far as my observations go, both in this and in other Provinces, the circumstances, economic and psychological, which made for the stability of the joint family tend to still disappear. The institution is in the melting pot and tends to dissolve. And yet the laws still applied are those enunciated centuries ago. In a poor country such as India, where the standard of life is simple, there may still be cases of near relatives such as brothers and their families whom it suits best to live together even when their father has passed away. Living together voluntarily, though one need not, is one thing. Living together because one must, though one would rather not and because of the legal difficulty of separation, is quite another. The process of dissolution of the caste system is similarly a noticeable phenomenon. Its negative aspects are seen in controversies such as Brahmin non-Brahmin questions and the claims of the so-called depressed classes and untouchables. Its positive aspects are seen in the desire and the necessity to enlarge the circle of marriage and the cry for nationality. I do not propose further to enlarge on a topic somewhat controversial and political. But it serves to show that ancient legislation should only stand so long as the sentiment which is the force and the structure which is the body of the particular institution in Hindu society which it implicitly assumes are alive and no longer.

Even therefore in the field of research and still more in the field of reform, our work is still to do. That work cannot be done without the necessary money and the necessary men. It will not be done merely by annual conferences or by the exercise of individual ingenuity in drafting Bills. The difficulties are enormous. The vast majority of Hindus are illiterate and conservative. The masses and the women and to a large extent even the commercial classes dread reforms. The Government is not directly concerned in encouraging them, its declared policy is one of neutrality. Nevertheless, the flowing tide is with us. We are realising that unless we reform ourselves, our institutions, and to some extent our laws, we shall degenerate still further and shall perish, even though all the while we lay to ourselves the flattering unction that we are the most spiritual people on earth, while in reality we prove ourselves amongst the weakest and least fitted to survive in the struggle of nations. We seek reform not because we will but because we must. I have said enough I hope to show that while we realise the necessity for reform we do not underrate the difficulties of the task before us. Without further loss of time we must equip ourselves to carry on the work before us. The Association must set its own house in order.

Amendment of the Special Marriage Act, 1872.

(Mr. M. R. Jayakar sends us the following for publication and says that he is convinced that this Bill will push forward the cause of women's progress very considerably and hopes that the women of India will give him their best support as against the orthodox feeling which this Bill is sure to raise in certain quarters.—Editor.)

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS.

The laws of all civilised countries provide for the contract of civil marriage by persons who may so desire. The disability to contract such marriages in India is merely territorial and there is no reason why a similar law should not be enacted for this country. The enactment, if passed, would be merely optional and leaves intact the existing personal laws which control the performance of marriages.

The reasons which have induced me to draft this Bill are as follows:—

Sir Henry Maine as Law Member of the Governor-General's Council had introduced a Civil Marriage Bill; but, as the Government were then immediately concerned with an enactment to prescribe a civil form of marriage applicable only to Brahmos, by whom they were moved for the enactment of a secular law to enable them to contract marriages, its provisions were so limited in the Bill which became Act III of 1872.

In 1909, the late Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu and later on Dr. H. S. Gour had also introduced a similar Bill, but its provisions were eventually transformed into those of Act XXX of 1923.

The Baroda State have recently introduced a Civil Marriage Bill; while the Laws of other Indian States are understood to provide for the performance of such marriages. The advantages of the measure, if enacted, are obvious. The Bill would enable persons subject to polygamous marriage laws to contract monogamous marriages and remove the inequality in the matter of divorce. It would elevate the status of women. These benefits have already been assured to the Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains by Act XXX of 1923, and there is no reason why the benefit that that Act confers upon the communities named should not be extended to other communities who might as regards succession be equally brought under the law enacted in the

Indian Succession Act. A provision to this effect has not been inserted in the Bill, but it can be added at a later stage if public opinion favours it. The absence of a civil marriage law lends itself to perjury and artificial conversions which it is the policy of the State to prevent. It was so observed by Sir Henry Maine who advocated the establishment of a non-sectarian marriage law in order to prevent the abuse resulting from such conversions (Proceedings Imperial Council, dated 27th November, 1868, pp. 498, 499).

To sum up then, the advantages of such marriages are as follows:—

1. Such marriages are recognised and provided for by the laws of all civilised countries, and it is possible to contract such marriages outside the territorial limits of India. The disability, therefore, is purely territorial, and patriotic Indians are naturally anxious to remove all such disabilities from their way.

2. The Bill is monogamous in its policy and would result in introducing monogamy where polygamous marriages alone are at present possible.

3. It would prevent artificial conversions resulting from the exigency of marriages.

4. It would give a wider field for selection and thus ensure a happier domestic life.

5. It would introduce a greater sincerity in marriages by dispensing with the subscription of a declaration which many desiring to marry under the existing Act have to subscribe to not without considerable mental reserve.

6. It would tend to the unification of the Indian races without at the same time interfering with their personal religion.

7. It would give the wife a more assured position and entitle her to exercise her right of divorce which may not be possible if married under her personal law.

8. And being merely optional, it trenches upon no one's rights, but merely prescribes a form to those who, while desiring to escape from the thraldom of their religious ritual, do not wish to renounce it.

It is believed that, with the growing strength of the national sentiment, such a Bill has become a public desideratum, and it has therefore been decided to re-introduce it in the Central Legislature.

M. R. JAYAKAR.

Madras Women's Conference.

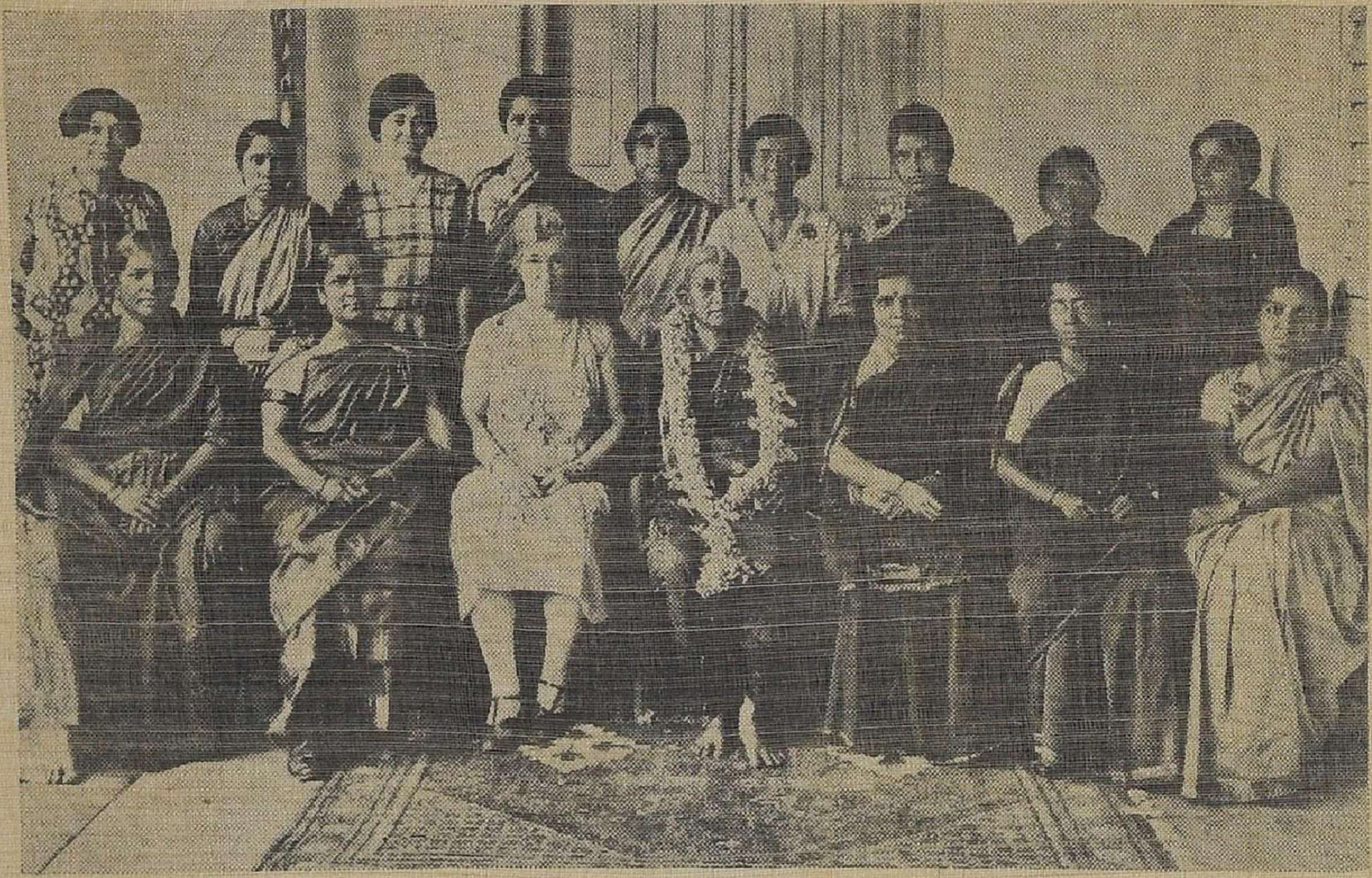
The Presidential address at the Madras Constituent Women's Conference on Educational and Social Reform was delivered by Mrs. M. E. Cousins on 16th November, 1929. . This year's Conference was opened by Lady Beatrix Stanley.

This is the fourth time that the Madras Constituent Conference of the All-India Women's Conference on Education, Reform has assembled. So momentous has been the result of its earlier deliberations, and so fraught with possibilities of future changes for India are the present times, that I realise how great is the honour you have done me in inviting me to be your president for this year and the responsibility that lies on me to be worthy of the office. I am particularly grateful for the kindness you have shown me in view of the fact that I have been absent from India for 18 months. I can truly say however that while I was absent from India, during my world's tour India was seldom absent from my thoughts and speech for in over a hundred meetings which I addressed in Europe, America and Japan I never failed to tell my audiences of the work of these women's conferences and of women's organisations in India for various specialised objects. I believe that such proclamation of the awakened and capable powers of the women of India was a course of education for the adults of the West which had been omitted by their local educational authorities but one which will be fruitful in the international appreciations, which are indispensable to world peace and to the attainment of India's national aspirations.

I feel that my presidentship is under particularly auspicious auspices in that Her Excellency Lady Beatrix Stanley is so graciously amongst us and that she will receive from this gathering first impressions of the strong currents of life that are evident everywhere amongst Indian women. We thank her for her encouraging message.

The Child Marriage Act.

The rapid speed with which all things move is a characteristic of the present time. We have only to give a strong push towards a goal and we find that the Time Spirit gives us assistance far beyond our expectations. I would remind you that when we first met in this very hall four years ago and grouped our way towards a clear expression of our desire for better education and more education we came across the barrier of early marriage. We thought then that we could take no more pronounced step than to urge that no marriage of girls should take place before 16. No organisation in the country had at the time formulated a demand for legislation on child marriage. It remained for Her Highness the Maharani of Baroda, President of the first All-India Women's Conference, had in Poona, three months later than our Madras Conference, to be the first to sound



THE FOURTH MADRAS CONSTITUENT WOMEN'S CONFERENCE ON EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL REFORM.

The second day's proceedings on Social Reform were under the chairmanship of **Mrs. S. Srinivasa Aiyangar.** She is seen in the centre with a few of the Reception Committee Members.

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a clarion call for a law to prohibit child marriage. It was the resolution of that conference which on the 7th of January 1927 first urged the Government of India *to pass legislation* making marriage under 16 years a penal offence. The women of India leaped forward to follow the lead of the conference. Before six months have passed, our champion in the Legislative Assembly had tabled the Child Marriage Bill and to-day our first thought must be of gratitude to Rai Bahadur Harbilas Sarda and all the men and women and the youth of both the sexes who by their hard work have succeeded in placing the Child Marriage Restraint Act on the statute book. Thus the first push of the Women's Conference on Educational Reform has brought us to one goal. We have to consolidate the gain by vigilance over the details of the enforcement of the law through such instruments as strict registration of births and marriages so that the ages may be under clear supervision. Our Conference must be ready also after the 1st of April, 1930, to help in taking legal proceedings if there should be any flouting of the law. But to-day our hearts are full of joy that a historic milestone has been passed on the way to the complete accomplishment of our ideals and the freeing of young people.

Another instance of the speed of the women's movement is the expansion of objectives for which our Conference this year stands. Such a full flood of conscious life had coursed through the women in all the constituent conferences of last year that at the Patna All-India session it burst through the confining banks of educational reform only. It is self-evident that the many reforms which are needed in women's conditions all act and react on education and accordingly resolutions relating generally to women's life come within the scope of this year's conference. While we think of the division as in terms of Education and Social Reform these are for convenience only in the conduct of our business. It will be seen from the resolutions that many of them might equally well be placed in the alternate sections. The Conference is not a duality. It is an indivisible unity. It may be that in the future as in the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference it eventually has sections also on Health, Industry and Government, yet all these are as the various limbs of the one life and have to function not independently but interdependently. The same is the case with the Women's Education Fund. We have financial responsibility and loyalty to the Conference Fund which is continuously needed to pay the working expenses of propaganda, office, printing, etc., and I hope that every Constituent Conference will gladly share that responsibility by collecting not less than Rs. 100 each for that purpose. But we have also the privilege and opportunity and duty of helping to collect the lakhs of rupees which are necessary for establishing a Home Science College with its nursery, primary and secondary practice schools on the model of the resolutions we have all drafted as our ideals. It is from this Women's Education Fund also that other necessary reforms about text-books, housing for teachers, etc., have to be financed. We see how Christians in America and England are at the moment employing every means to collect money for their missionary Women's Colleges here. Let us be encouraged by their example to organise in this country great sums for all kinds of educational institutions. If people in foreign countries support education here

surely the people of this country should be even more enthusiastic. We must raise 40 lakhs in this vast country for women's education.

In Kyoto (Japan), the largest Buddhist temple was burnt down 30 years ago. In rebuilding it no ropes could be found strong enough to raise the great timbers of its pillars and roofing. Human hair was found to be the strongest substance and when a call for this went out through Kyoto, 4,000 women devotedly shaved off their dark tresses, willing to sacrifice their beauty in service to the temple of the Enlightened and Compassionate One. We need such a spirit here to erect the temple of learning. We women must mobilise our forces to that end. On the principle of first things first let us make the establishment of compulsory and free primary education throughout this Presidency and all India our primary and immediate goal. A spirit of promise, goodwill, expectation and expansion are to-day in the air. It is a psychological moment comparable to that of the period 1917-1919, out of which eventuated the enfranchisement of women and their emergence into all spheres of public life with the success which is willingly accorded to them. Let us utilise this time for a drive to secure primary education for every child in the country.

I am the more impressed with the importance of laying the foundation of the literacy of the masses because of what I have seen and felt in other countries since I last stood here. Many a time my heart has ached with longing that India should soon enjoy the same facilities for education as the children get in all other countries. Our task is enormous—to raise literacy from 2 per cent. to 92 per cent. for our girls and from 12 per cent. to the same for our boys but we will not be paralysed by numbers but rejoice in the honour that is ours in our knowledge that it can and will be accomplished. Japan was faced with the same problem and solved it so successfully that the immense primary school buildings and play grounds of Japan catch the eye in every landscape and in them 98 per cent. of Japanese children spend nine happy years. I might instance that one Japanese city has 50 kindergartens and 10 Day nurseries and all this education has developed since 1870 when the Emperor Meiji issued an edict that there should not be a village without a school nor a family with a single uneducated child. In California it was thrilling to find that the remarkable proportion of sixty per cent. of the revenues of that State were given for education. Ancient India realised the basic need for education. The *Manusmriti* lays down this truth in these words: "The State in which the administrator allows the good and virtuous educationist, and therefore good and sound education to starve—that whole State will begin to starve very soon similarly and fall in status and civilisation with all its people and their servants, the administrators." I have only to quote the following figures to you to show you how utterly wrong are the ratios of expenditure of India's revenues as contrasted with the wisdom of Manu:—Of the total of the country's revenues, 27 per cent. are spent on military purposes, 15 per cent. for police and administration, 5 per cent. for education and 1 per cent. for health ("India in 1927-28,"—*J. Coatman*).

India is physically starving to-day because its mind has been starved for several centuries. Women are the nourishers of the race. Now they are

awake to the necessity for feeding the mind as well as the body. Our new slogan will complete the circle of life for every individual:—"Well born, Well educated, and Well employed."

MASS EDUCATION.

The establishment of mass education adapted to the conditions of the individual, the locality and the community, and including elements for physical, mental, emotional, civic and spiritual development is a noble cause and a basic part of responsible national reconstruction. Disproportionate national expenditure which prevents the provision of education will have to be grappled with and removed. Women's desire for world peace and disarmament is linked up with the need of the race for the positive blessings that will accrue to it from the money set free in an era of non-militarism. We shall then have human welfare instead of inhuman warfare.

We women will undertake from to-day an enthusiastic, eager, persistent campaign to get every child into a primary school, to have the school and play ground into which the little boy and girl can go and to give them the teachers who will give them the happiness. The report of the Hartog Committee on Education and the findings of the Commission on Physical Training will strengthen our hands. I congratulate Madras City on the remarkable increase in the numbers of young women who during the last few years have got the facilities for training as teachers through the self-sacrificing devotion of voluntary and official organisers of Women's Training Homes. While this year we are concentrating our educational resolutions on primary education, we remember that our Foundation Memorandum on Educational Reform covers the whole field of education. When abroad, I visited very many educational and social service institutions in Europe, America, Japan and China and I was proud to find that our resolutions are so fundamentally in line with the latest findings of the most up-to-date educationists. Our theories are sound, for they are based on the bedrock of living necessity. Now our need is for workers in every sphere.

DUTY OF WOMEN.

There is a joy in educational and social service which has to be experienced—it cannot be imagined. Every woman who helps to bring about conditions of freedom for those confined wrongly in body, mind or soul will gain a new zest in life. These conferences point out ways of giving such help raising the depressed, giving light and clear sight to those in purdah, knowledge to the widow, rescue—as has been so nobly achieved by Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi, M. L. C.—to those exploited for sex purposes, and commercialised vice, health to the mother and political opportunities to women for national service in all ways.

Finally I would like to point out that though we call these women's conferences and at present we reserve them only for women members and visitors, we do not look on them as for the good of women only. This is only a transitional means of proceeding to that time when through the practice women get in these specialised meetings they will become efficient to mingle and co-operate

with men without danger of either sex becoming submerged but when there will be true, free, helpful exchange of views and co-partnership in solving together the problem which for the moment we now discuss apart. The Trinity of Mother, Father and Child is the actual Unit of Indian Life. The child is only "well born" where there is equality of freedom, health development, respect in the duality of dissimilar complementaries, the father and mother. And this is equally true of those men and women who whether actually parents or not, perform by their natures the functions of mental and spiritual parentage through remoulding the world nearer to the heart's desire. There is no real division of the problems of the sexes. The status of men and women acts and reacts on both like the seeming divisions of our conference. They are one and we work as the Irish say "separately together" for the good of the whole.

Neither are these conferences working for the good of India only. Our expressed ideals convey needed supplements also to the ideals of other nations. Again in my travels I found that secular education produced a secular people and a materialistic civilisation. From the beginning we in India have recognised the spiritual nature of the individuals as the seed from which everything must evolve. We have laid down as one of the first necessities of education that moral training based on spiritual ideals must be included in all schools and colleges. This is in line with the Indian custom by which the first letter taught to a Hindu child is the sacred symbol 'Om' and the Koran forms the primer of every Muslim child. There are eternal verities common to all religious faiths, a realisation of the relationship of the known to the Unknown, of the creature to the Creator, without reverence for the Infinite, that inclusive life which is Law and Love, called by Emerson the 'Over soul', the results of education will fail to develop the high character which must be our motive in all our work.

This spiritual consciousness and the fundamental importance of the family are essentially characteristic of Asian countries as contrasted with other continents and they are gifts which Asia can make to world culture. But they can become serviceable to humanity only when Asia herself becomes aware of their value to others and organises them for the enrichment of the human race. For this purpose I dream dreams that these All-India Women's Conferences may blossom into a future All-Asian Women's Conference. With these considerations in our mind we shall proceed to the details of our programme. (Applause).

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Infant Welfare.

New Zealand Methods.

In 1927 New Zealand statistics showed the infant mortality rate per 1000 births as 38:74; in 1928 it fell to 36:18 per 1000. This phenomenally low level has never before been reached in this or any other country. A New Zealand baby has more than 69 chances out of 100 to survive his first year; moreover he has a longer expectation of life "than his cousins born in any other country, namely 62:76 years.

This satisfactory state of affairs is attributed mainly to the system of Baby Welfare originated and instituted by Sir Truby King, and commonly known as the Plunket system. Before its institution the Infant Mortality Rate in New Zealand was about 70 per thousand. If this rate were maintained to-day we should be needlessly losing over 1000 babies a year who are now saved. Moreover under the old conditions 5,000 or 6,000 more would emerge from first year feeble and unfitted for the battle of life.

In order to establish Sir Truby King's System, the Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children (commonly known as the Plunket Society) was formed in 1907. It was defined as a "League for mutual helpfulness and mutual education, with a full recognition of the fact that, so far as motherhood and babyhood were concerned, there was as much need for practical reform and 'going to school' on the part of the cultured and well-to-do as there was on the part of the so-called poor and ignorant." The Aims and Objects of the Society are as follows:—

(1) To uphold the Sacredness of the Body and the Duty of Health and to inculcate a lofty view of the responsibilities of maternity.

(2) To *acquire* knowledge on matters affecting the health of Women and Children, and to disseminate such knowledge freely.

(3) To train specially nurses, to be called Plunket nurses, in matters affecting the well-being of pregnant women, nursing mothers, and babies.

(4) To co-operate with any organisations working for similar objects.

The Society commenced work in Dunedin 21 years ago (in 1907), with one Committee and one Nurse. The Karitane-Harris Baby Hospital was established in the same year. (Karitane was the name of Sir Truby King's own home, while the funds for establishing the Hospital were donated by Mr. Wolff Harris.) By 1914 about twenty Branches and upwards of fifty Sub-branches had been formed, and twenty-seven nurses were at work. The War then hampered development by creating a shortage of nurses, but there are now 6 Karitane Hospitals, 117 permanent nurses employed in 71 residential branches, and upwards of 500 Sub-branches and out-stations. This organisation serves a population of rather less than 1 1/2 millions, which is spread over two islands, roughly 1000 miles long and nearly 200 miles across in the widest parts. It is supported by voluntary subscriptions and donations, and is generously subsidised by the Government.

The Plunket nurses' services are free to every family desiring them, but —and this is the cardinal point of the system—a nurse calls only in response to an invitation. It is believed that work built up on this voluntary basis is sound and permanent—more so than that which is established on a system of compulsory visiting. It also makes for true democracy in the movement, there being no suspicion of patronage or charity. In actual fact, absolutely all sections of the community avail themselves of the services of the Plunket nurse. The Society contends, however, that the most valuable work is done amongst the more intelligent sections of the community—amongst the mothers who are capable of being "the competent executive in their own homes", and of handing on to others the health principles they have grasped themselves.

By courtesy of the Government, every Registrar of Births supplies the local Plunket nurse with confidential lists of all births notified in the district. Within the first fortnight after the birth a note of invitation is sent to each mother by the Plunket nurse, enclosing a card which the mother may return intimating whether or when she would like to avail herself of the Plunket nurse's advice and help. Ever-increasing numbers avail themselves of these services, while country mothers avail themselves of the advice given in the Society's publications.

The ideal of the Plunket nursing service is an educative health mission. Thousands of healthy mothers take their healthy babies regularly every month to visit the Plunket nurse, and the child is cared for according to her directions. It has regular hours for sleeping, waking, eating, playing; from the nurse the mother learns what foods to give it as it is weaned, the process being slowly and carefully performed during a period of several months. The result is a beautiful, healthy, smiling child, content to lie and play with its fingers and toes, content with all that befalls it. Wakeful nights are unknown, and so too is the piteous wailing cry of the suffering child that used to be so common and that is so heart breaking to the parents. Anyone who knows a Plunket baby is an enthusiastic supporter of the system that reared it. The Plunket nurses do no bedside nursing however, and all cases of disease are at once referred to medical men. They visit all new families coming under their care, and all young and delicate babies. The most serious part of their work lies in treating cases of indigestion in its various forms, malnutrition, and infantile diarrhoea. These are very frequent causes of death or of permanently undermined vitality as may be gathered from the fact that from infantile diarrhoea alone the death rate of infants varies from 5 to 50 per 1000. In New Zealand it has been reduced from 15 per 1000 before the introduction of the Plunket system to less than 2 per 1000.

This work is carried on in rooms conveniently situated in each centre. These rooms are brightly furnished and equipped with scales, screens, comfortable chairs and so forth. The tendency is for smaller towns and suburbs to build rooms so that they may be new and attractive looking. A borough council generally gives a site, and local shops the furniture. In a recent case of such building, in a small country town, the Chinese residents gave a cheque for £27. For the seven preceding years a local firm had provided the Society

with rooms, lighting and other services free of charge. The public want to give all they can to help this work.

It is through this district work of the nurses that the Plunket system is known to the public. Going behind this we come to the work of the Hospitals or Karitane Homes, as they are called. These take in serious cases where digestive troubles have advanced so far as to endanger the life. The babies go in pathetic, wizened little mites, many of whom have steadily and slowly wasted away since birth, unable to assimilate their food, almost too weak to wail their misery; they come out big, strong, and smiling. In such cases baby and mother interact upon each other's health, so another branch of the Hospital work includes care of sickly mothers. The most remarkable part of this work is the restoration of breast-milk in cases where it has failed and the baby has been weaved several weeks, a month, or even longer. The failures are almost *nil*.

In only one of these Hospitals are Plunket nurses trained, namely, in Dunedin, where the Society conducts a specialised post-graduate course of training in maternal and child welfare. Applicants must be on the State Register of Certificated Nurses or Midwives, preferably both. The course of training occupies four to six months, according to previous nursing qualifications. The training includes practical routine care of normal babies, and those suffering from various forms of indigestion, malnutrition, prematurity, rickets, etc.; practical work in the Mothercraft Home attached to the Hospital, where mothers and babies are admitted for restoration of failing milk supply or any difficulty connected with breast-feeding; the preparation of various milk mixtures and foods for infants where breast-feeding is impossible; field work in the district with the Plunket nurses in the various city areas; and a course of lectures covering the care of mother and child. About 50 nurses are trained annually.

In the other Karitane Homes untrained apprentices are, for a fee of about £35, given a 16 month course which fits them to be the nurses of healthy babies in private families.

One cannot conclude any account of the work being done for mother and child in New Zealand without reference to the splendid outpouring of money and effort on the part of all classes of the community. The women of this country have rendered inestimable service to the cause, giving whole-heartedly of time and strength and building up and maintaining the organisation and funds of the various Branches of the society. They have been backed and supported at every twin by business and professional men, and the mothers—indeed one should say the parents—have come forward to avail themselves of the profferred help, and have then done their part by handing on the knowledge they have gained.

The success of the Plunket system has made it famous throughout the world. In 1918 it was established in London, it is rapidly being established throughout Australia, while overseas nurses who have come to New Zealand for training have carried it with them to such distant countries as Canada, South Africa and China.

A Presidential Address.

By Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi,

Deputy President, Madras Legislative Council.

(*The following is an extract of her address delivered at the Annual Conference of the Andhra Mahila Maha Sabha at Bezwada in November* 1929.)

It is fortunate that the Indian Women's Movement, at the present moment, unlike women's movement in other countries, has the sympathy and support of our men.

It was no less a person than our dear Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the first and the wisest of reformers in India, that during the early British rule in India had fought singlehanded against the cruel custom of a *Sati* and got it abolished by a statutory measure with the help of that high-minded British statesman, Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor of Bengal who (to his credit it must be said) not satisfied with the mere passing of the Act saw it enforced. Again, it was that famous Pandit Vidyasagar who in response to the woes of the child-widow, used his scholarship in Sanskrit and his profound knowledge of Hindu sacred literature and prevailed upon another British statesman Sir Charles Grant to pass the Widow Re-marriage Act into law.

Again, the agitation by the high-minded Hindus for the abolition of the Devadasi service in the Hindu temples has been going on since 1869 and it is very much to be deplored that even to-day, we have not yet got proper legislation to effectively put down such a wicked and cruel custom even though the Indian State of Mysore has set a good example by passing a G.O. for its complete abolition even as early as 1909 and thus has demonstrated to the world that Hindu religion does not sanction immorality in either Man or Woman.

Again it was these noted philanthrophists, Sir Lala Gangaram of Punjab, Rai Bahadur Veeresalingam Pantulu of the Andhra Desa, the great social worker Swami Shradhananda who, having been moved by the miserable lot of our widows, have established hostels and schools for their maintenance, education and training so as to transform their lives of sorrow into one of useful service to humanity.

Nor should we fail to mention the very laudable efforts of Professor Karve and Mr. Devadhar to improve the women's lot in this country and to raise their status in society. As is well-known to the world, Professor Karve and Mr. Devadhar have devoted their lives to the noble cause of Indian Women's education.

Again in every Province, I visited, I have noted with joy not unmingled with pride, that men whether they be followers of Aryasamaj, Sanatana Dharma, Brahmo, Ramakrishna, Theosophy, or other denomination are actually assisting and co-operating with devoted women workers who are fulfilling their legitimate duties by the depressed and the oppressed of their sex.

Dr. Sen of the Central Provinces, a busy medical practitioner, out of love for women's cause has collected 35 lakhs through his sole efforts, has established a high school for girls in Cawnpore, and keeps it in a flourishing condition too.

The Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Jullundur started by that noble Arya Samajist worker, Mr. Deva Raj, is doing a very valuable work; it maintains an orphanage, a widow's home, a hostel for girls (both married and single) and has a residential primary and high school and in addition trains teachers for starting girls' schools in the villages.

We must also on this occasion record our feelings of deepest sorrow at the loss under very tragic circumstances of our beloved countryman—Lala Lajput Rai who was a fearless advocate of the women's cause. Nor can we forget on this day to pay our humble tribute to that able champion of the women's cause Sir Hari Singh Gour who has introduced and carried out successfully in the Assembly many a measure for the social and economic amelioration of the Indian Women or our friend Rao Bahadur Harbilas Sarda, the brave author of the Child Marriage Restraint Act. So the good and the great among our men, have felt very keenly for the suffering and the misery of their women and have taken enormous pains to better their condition.

We have been given municipal and legislative franchise. We can face election on equal terms with our men and those of us who have had the necessary education and training should be prepared to shoulder the full responsibilities of public and social life and co-operate with our men to promote the welfare of our people.

We should seek speedy remedies for all our social evils, some of which we share in common with the rest of the civilised world and some are peculiar to India such as the custom of Child Marriage, the stigma attached to early widowhood, the practice of purdah, the dedi-

cation of young women to a life of shame in the name of religion and hoary custom.

When speaking on Social and Moral Legislation, I like to say a few words on two most urgent reforms that are now engaging the attention of the public.

Rao Bahadur Harbilas Sarda, the author of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, will go down to posterity as a great Humanitarian and Saviour of Indian Womanhood, because Child Marriage Restraint Act is nothing but a measure to protect the rights of children. To marry a child of 8, 10, or 12 or 13 and to make her a wife and mother at a tender age should not go in the name of religion. In other civilised countries, abuses of parental authority which endanger the bodily or mental welfare of the child are punishable, the highest aim of the State being the protection of the future generation. So, let us assure the British Government that they have the moral support of the whole world and the Indian intelligentia in this righteous measure against the protest of not even one per cent. of orthodox Indians, which protest too, we know, is coming costly from the backwards south.

The Pandits and Moulvis cannot in the least harm a good Government while the enlightened womanhood, both Hindu and Mohamedan, are determined to have reform and India's millions, though silent on this question, accord their whole-hearted support to this legislation. His Excellency Lord Irwin and Viscount Goschen, the two eminent British statesmen, have earned the love and gratitude of the present and future generations for their noble and courageous stand by this humanitarian measure.

The thoughtless few even in the educated world lazily utter that public opinion has not been sufficiently educated on the need for such a change in their customs, easily forgetful of the fact that in other advanced countries, moral health and sanitary reform always preceded the information of public opinion in their favour and were themselves educative factors.

Take the Statute book in England.

How many Laws and Regulations have existed during the 19th century to protect children against cruelty, against neglect, and ill-treatment?

What is the public opinion, one would like to be told, that is required to enact measures for the protection of minor children? Most pathetic and most deplorable is the fact that while we have Societies and Legislative enactments in this country to protect the animals from

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starvation and ill-treatment by the owners, we have nothing like the English Children Act, or the German, or the American Act to protect the Indian human young from any such abuse or ill-treatment.

In 1885, as the results of the report of the Inter-National Congress, Criminal Amendment Act was passed in England, one of the features of the legislation is that it punishable to procure a girl or woman under 21 for illegal carnal affection.

The Statutes of 1885 and 1908 serve a useful purpose in England to control vice and a court of Chancery in England would not allow a mother leading an immoral life to be the guardian of the girl.

Further, we know perfectly well that when Josephine Butler started a campaign against the State regulation of vice and had the Contagious Diseases Act repealed by the Parliament, there was not much of public opinion behind her.

The following extracts from her memoirs give a description of the public enlightenment in that country on moral and social legislation:—

"The abolitionists carried on their campaign in the teeth of obstacles that seemed insuperable. The press was either bitterly hostile or silent, the Church was (though again with certain shining exceptions) contemptuously hostile, the average public opinion was apathetic or shocked. The fact that the leader of the agitation against the Contagious Diseases Act was a woman aggravated the scandal and stirred up a kind of opposition that a man in the same position need not have encountered, for in 1869 it was considered almost indecent for a woman to speak from a platform. The press, when it was not boycotting the whole subject, descended to misrepresentation of the vilest description. Mrs. Butler and those who fought with her were described as "women with a hobby too nasty to be touched", "a clique of noisy perambulating legislators", "the shrieking sisterhood", "indecent *maennads*", etc. It described their protest as "wanton nastiness", "historical claptrap", "reckless falsehood". The Saturday Review which excelled itself in virulence gravely declared that it would as soon have the great sewer question discussed in a novel as a woman's position in the world. The outburst of the Daily and Weekly press were matched in the speeches of opponents in the House of Commons. A Member of Parliament for Portsmouth, probably expressed the feelings of many honourable members when he said in the House, on February 13th, 1872, "I look upon these women who have taken up this matter as worse than prostitutes."

The above was the reception that was accorded to that heroic and the most sympathetic English woman in the 19th century.

Just contrast the situation in India. When we started the campaign to suppress the evil custom of dedicating girls to the temples, the sympathetic utterances of the Indian Press, both Vernacular and English, the helpful attitude of the public as shown by the innumerable meetings convened in support of my motion and resolutions passed by men and women associations and above all by the unanimous hearty support given to my resolution by the local council itself and the safe passage of my Bill into an act is a sure testimony to the popularity of such reform in our society.

Only the State has not come forward with an effective machinery and with a suitable legislation to protect the minors. Laws for the protection of children and minors are very defective in this presidency. I may point out that my Devadasi legislation is nothing but a child saving measure, is nothing but a legislation to prevent the training of minor children for immoral purposes.

We are thankful to the Madras Legislature and the Government for having passed my Devadasi Bill into an Act, but owing to the delay in the enforcement of the Act, much oppression and annoyance to the communities concerned by the "vested interests" in the temples have resulted. We further appeal to the Government to immediately enforce the Act and thus save in time thousands of our innocent girls from a life of prostitution.

So, it is the duty of the enlightened amongst us who have become alive to the serious nature of these evils to start not only a vigorous campaign of educative propaganda against these vicious practices but also demand with one voice effective legislation to abolish these evil customs that hinder our full physical and mental development and never rest or sleep till we see justice restored to our sex and until we secure adequate legal measures for the protection of our mothers, children, the innocent minor girls, and for the production of a robust and virile race.

We have no right to remain idle or indifferent, when the mothers and the children of India die in such large numbers, when many more become invalidated through sickness and disease, when millions of our men and women, even in the prime of their life are carried away by epidemics every year, when the destitute old and young are crying for relief, when at every turn of our beautiful cities we come across crowds of beggars old, young and sick, who, clothed in rags, stretch out their deformed and diseased hands for a few pies, when the brothels in our

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cities contain as many young girls and children ranging from the age of 8 to 16 undergoing agonies both physical and mental. So, I need not point out to you, that India needs thousands and millions of devoted women missionary workers to attend to her woes, but it pains me to not that this Presidency, which could boast of the greatest number of Women Colleges and the largest number of University graduates and the most advanced in education, possess the fewest women *honorary workers*. As Mahatma Gandhi has observed once, I also feel it is the system of education that is responsible for such a sorrowful state of affairs.

The system for both boys and girls has to be remodelled so that the University may have as its primary goal the formation of individual character and conduct and the training of leaders of society, who would ably and efficiently direct and guide their country's affairs, as was so beautifully expressed by His Excellency Lord Irwin before the Inter-University Board.

Another reason is that our academically qualified women having become absorbed in Government service have neither the time nor the energy to undertake regular and systematic social work. More than that, Government servants bound by the Government Servants Conduct Rules, have become so many routine machines—a fact very much to be deplored.

We give grateful expression to the very valuable help we receive from the Missionary educationists and Medical Women in our social service activities. While our educated women graduates are afraid of giving expression to their honest views on many of our problems, the missionary ladies have willingly rendered valuable service in organising meetings to educate the people on the need of social and health reform.

This is a serious situation for us to consider if the service of the educated women of the country is not to be lost to the community which is suffering at present under the heavy load of illiteracy and is passing through a critical stage in its existence.

The ancient Hindu legislators realised that both sexes were equal and said before the world that women had equal rights with men for freedom, for the acquirement of knowledge, education and spirituality. So, the laws depriving Hindu woman of her rights and privileges and assigning her an inferior place in society must be only of recent origin and I feel sorry to observe that we Hindus in particular have become creatures, more of custom or habit, than of reason or true religion.

No enlightened woman, no woman with any self-respect can put up with such one-sided laws—laws which have placed us in an inferior position even to our Muhammadan and Christian sisters.

According to the existing codes, the Hindu widow is not entitled to any share of her husband's property; as a matter of fact the mistress of the house to-day will become slave to-morrow to her daughter-in-law or her *reversionary* relations on the death of her husband and the daughters are left to the mercy of the brothers and sisters-in-law after the death of their father.

Again our marriage laws, which render woman a chattel or piece of furniture in the hands of her husband, the vilest sinner and hardened criminal as he may be, need revision according to the changed conditions of modern life. The mother's claim to the guardianship of her children and to adoption must be recognised and be made equal with that of her husband.

To modify such unjust laws and to make it suitable to the needs of the present day society, a reformed society should be started for the up lift, protection and help of the Hindu women.

The illiteracy of our men and women is a great handicap to India in her struggle for social, economical and political freedom even though very often literacy is no test of one's understanding and culture.

Education of our women on the right lines is our greatest need at the present moment as we are made to realise every minute that no reform whether social, sanitary and health is possible without the willing co-operation of the women in the Home. Nor can we expect an illiterate mother, ignorant of the modern sciences of life, to train her children to be useful and patriotic citizens.

In our Presidency where a public demand for girls' education has been created, the difficulty to spread education among women has been one of finance.

As the Madras report says:—

No special difficulties have been experienced in introducing compulsion to Non-Muslim Girls in any of the places it has been tried.

While acknowledging our indebtedness to all those British Statesmen, rulers and administrators, who have laboured for the people of India and while feeling thankful for the benefit that Indian Society has derived by a close association with a refined, free and disciplined nation, I cannot help feeling that the day is come as that great son of

India, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy prophesied even 100 years before, for Indians to shoulder the responsibility of the internal administration of their country.

The prophet Rajah Ram Mohan Roy had written:—

"Is it possible that after 100 years hence the Indians who have acquired general and political knowledge as well as modern arts and sciences will not have the spirit as well as the inclination to resist effectually measures serving to degrade them in the scale of society? It should not be lost sight of that the position of India is very different from that of Ireland, to any quarter of which an English fleet may suddenly convey a body of troops that may force its way in the requisite direction and succeed in suppressing every effort of a refractory spirit. Were India to share one-fourth of the knowledge and energy of that country, should she prove from her remote situation, her richness and her vast population, either useful or profitable as a willing province, an ally of the British Empire, or troublesome and annoying as a determined enemy?

In common with those who seem partial to the British rulé from the expectation of future benefits arising out of the connection, I necessarily feel extremely grieved in often witnessing acts and regulations passed by Government without consulting or seeming to understand the feelings of its Indian subjects and without considering that this people have had for more than half a century the advantages of being ruled by and associated with an enlightened nation, advocates of liberty and promoters of knowledge."

What he wrote more than 100 years before is truly applicable to India at the present day, because I cannot believe that a country that has produced men of the type of Tagore, J. C. Bose, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, Gandhi, Syed Ahmed, Professor Raman, men of international fame and name, could be barren of men with character, intelligence and capacity to guide, control, and administer their country's affairs. Therefore I am firmly of opinion that further constitutional advancement and extension of the franchise is an inevitable necessity in the interests of national progress and national efficiency. In a famous passage, the immortal Mr. Montague, who inaugurated the new era in India, boldly stated that one subject that Lord Chelmsford and he had in devising the reforms was to stir the Indian masses from the pathetic slumber into which they have fallen, which conception is both noble and correct. Constitutional reform should always aim above existing requirements and reach the level of future requirements. Do Indian women deserve an extension of the franchise? The women de-

sire no less than the men a larger measure of Self-Government and provincial autonomy. Patriotic and eminent Indians from the great reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy downwards to Mahatma Gandhi have courageously defended the Indian woman's cause and fought for their rights.

The history of the Reform Councils clearly shows that our Indian brothers have initiated many a reform both in the Local Council and in the Assembly to further the social progress of their women folk, and to securê for them more rights and privileges.

It is an admitted fact that forms of Government and social conditions act and react on each other. Many many years ago, Mysore and Baroda introduced social legislation, a field from which the British Government generally keeps aloof on the ground that a foreign Government should remain neutral in all questions of socio-religious character. The present Reform Councils have interested themselves in a larger measure in these questions than the old bureaucratic councils.

With examples like Japan and Turkey which countries with the help of their national Governments, are combining social with political advancement and in our own country the model Native States like Mysore and Baroda with such examples before us who would not wish for larger share in the Government of their country or full responsible Government? Freedom and responsibility bring out all that is best in the individual and in the race. Since the inauguration of the Montagu and Chelmsford Reforms and the giving of Municipal and legislative franchise to women, there has been a tremendous awakening among the women of India, as the result of which their activities have spread into educational, social, economical and political spheres of life.

Not only women have been benefited by the reforms but all depressed and backward communities have been aroused to a sense of their new duties and responsibilities and have come to take a keen and intelligent interest in the wider sphere of life. The full development and the full expression of an individual is well as a nation is possible only under a full measure of self-government. We trust and hope that India's legitimate aspirations would be fully realised during the viceroyalty of His Excellency Lord Irwin.

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The Individual—Or The Family?

By Shri Bhagawan Das.

(*An extract* from the address delivered by Shri Bhagawan Das, as President, at the anniversary of the Crosthwaite Girls' College, Allahabad, on 21st February* 1929.)

In western thought, it is customary to assume that the individual is the unit in the constitution of the state, and that the state, the nation, the national consciousness, nationalism, is the highest limit and reach of patriotism and human education. The ancient Indian view is that the family, of man-woman-child, is the unit, and that humanism is the ideal limit. At one time, not long ago, it used to be cast as a reproach at the Indian people that they had no national consciousness. To-day after the great War, the West is beginning to think that internationalism, humanism, is a higher ideal than nationalism. But the reproach against India was just, all the same, because we had forgotten humanism, and many other good things, and degenerated into crass tribalism and sectarianism; and we have deserved painful humiliations in order that we may remember those good ideals and live up to them again, by passing through a temporary phase of nationalism.

But whatever other trials and tribulations we may be destined to pass through, I most earnestly pray with all the strength of my heart, that India may be saved from one particular phase of Western experience, *viz.*, the setting of man against woman, and woman against man, which seems, to some of us Indians, to be the most painful, bewildering, and all-upsetting consequence of that excessive individualism, an essential feature of which is the notion that the individual is the unit of the state and the community. Our ancient law-giver has decided otherwise; the family is the unit.

"The man is not the man alone, but the man, the woman, the child. The sages have declared that the wife is the same as the husband." This human tri-unity is only the concrete embodiment of the principle of the incontrovertible Tri-Unity of the Universe, known to scientific thought as God-Nature-Man, to Christian theology as Father-Holy-Ghost-Son, and to Hindu theologians as the Tri-murti.

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* *Bharat Dharma.*

Jesus, the Christ, has also said (St. Mathew): "He that made them at the beginning made them male and female and they twain shall be as one." Muhammad, the Prophet, declares the same: *Min khalaqna kulli shayin zaujain,* "I, the Supreme Self, have created all things in pairs." All this only rings changes on the *Upanishat's* elemental utterance: The One divided It-Self into Two, became husband and wife; the I became I and Thou; Purusha became Purusha and Prakrti, God and God's Nature; the Original looked into the mirror of Emptiness (as the Sufis well say), and saw the reflected, reversed, Image of Itself whence man and woman are "contrary" of, and *Supplementary* to, each other. As the Puranas say, "He is thought, and she is language; she is body, and he is soul."

In the West, man and woman are said to have forgotten their older and true ideal, the same as the Indian, of better *half* and other *half*, and to be fighting for equality to-day. It is as if the right lobe and the left lobe of the same brain should fight with each other. It is madness. Our ideal has always been, not of equality, which involves odious comparison, whence conflict, but of identity of wife and husband, as two halves, *ardh-angi-ta,* in life, in essential interests, in home and hearth, in heart, in children; and this ideal will remain true, so long as the psycho-physical constitution of humanity remains what it is to-day, and does not become literally androgynous again, or wholly sexless, as legends say it was, millions of years ago.

865 65

New Zealand Notes.

While the Jubilee Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship which was held in Berlin last June is still in our minds, it is interesting to recall the fact that New Zealand was the first country in the world to give women the franchise, and that this was done in 1893, eleven years before the International Alliance was formed. The movement had its origin in the very early days of the Colony, for in 1843 Mr. Alfred Saunders and Sir William Fox advocated Woman Suffrage. The first serious worker for the movement, however was Mrs. Mary Muller, who landed in the Colony in 1850. Her husband being a magistrate she had many an opportunity to impart her views to the leading politicians of the day, who were generally shocked at the impropriety of such ideas. Her husband also disapproving, she was unable to work publicly for her sex's rights, but fortunately a cousin of hers owned a newspaper and placed its columns at her service. In this way she made her ideas familiar to the public. Then, feeling that the time was not yet ripe for the franchise, she turned her energies to the support of the Married Women's Property Protection Act, which was passed in 1880. Advancing years soon afterwards compelled Mrs. Muller's retirement from public life, but her work was too well planted to die out. During the next seven years Women's Franchise was discussed in Parliament whenever electoral measures were before the House. Then the Women's Christian Temperance Union of New Zealand took up the work, and women finished what a woman had begun. Many rebuffs were met with, and this is no place to set forth at length the details of a struggle that lasted six years. However, I cannot resist lifting a corner of the veil of time and giving just a glimpse from a letter I recently received. My correspondent writes: "My very earliest recollections are of my mother* coming back from a canvassing tour for signatures to a petition asking for the franchise. One of my elder brothers used to drive her about the district in a buggy. There were ten of us in the family (ten children) and now I think she must have been very wonderful to have found time to undertake any of this work." To women readers these few sentences convey more of the history of the struggle than any official report could do. Victory came in 1893.

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*Mrs. Lovell Smith.

As New Zealand had the honour of being the first country in the world to give women the franchise it was naturally assumed that women would forthwith play a prominent part in politics, that we would be the first to have women in Parliament and so on, whereas none has yet been elected to the House. Instead, they have preferred to go to work in their own quiet way. Our interest lies in making life more wholesome; in helping the poor and in preventing poverty; in caring for the sick and in raising the national standard of health, in trying to give working girls a chance to develop mentally, morally, and physically; in short, in extending to the state those services which we had previously been compelled to confine to the home. The national loaf needs the quiet working of the yeast as well as the showy kneading of the baker. Where legislation is needed we approach Parliament through the National Council of Women, and meet with unfailing courtesy and help. Men for the most part are interested in the Nation's Wealth and therefore in its working hours: women are chiefly concerned with the character and health of the people, and therefore with their leisure hours. During the last century man has established a proud record in the fields of commerce, industry, and science; may we women make as brave a showing during the coming century in our sphere.

N. Z.

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ஒவ்வொரு குடும்பத்தின் சௌக்கியமும் ஸ்திரிகளின் கவலையே!

இந்தியாவின் நான்கு புகழ்பெற்ற குடும்ப அவுஷதங்களையும்பற்றி அவர்கள் அறிந்திருப்பது அவசியம்.

லிட்டில்ஸ் ஓரியன்டல் பாம் : உடம்பில் உண்டாகும் நோய்களை உடனே தீர்க்கும் உண்மையான தைலம்.

ஹென்றீஸ் ஜ்வரஹரி : பலவிதமான ஜுரங்களையும் சுகப்படுத்தும் பேர் பெற்ற மருந்து.

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ஹென்றீஸ் கிலாகோல்ட் : இருமல், சளி, முதலிய சுவாசாசய நோய்களுக்கு தீவிர மருந்து.

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TAMIL

பாலிய விவாக மசோதாவின் வெற்றி.

"மாதர் தம்மை இழிவுசெய்யும் மடமையைக் கொளுத்துவோம், மனிதர் யாரும் ஒரு நிலை, சரிநிகர்சமான மாக வாழ்வமிந்த நாட்டிலே, ஏழை என்றும் அடிமை என்றும் எவரும் இல்லை ஜாதியில், இழிவுகொண்ட மனிதரென்பர் இந்தியாவிலில்லையே." எல்லாம்வல்ல இறைவனருளால் நம் பாலிய விவாக மசோதா நிறைவேறியது. இனி மாதர்களை இழிவுசெய்து பொம்மைபோல் விளையாடிய இளவிவாகம் ஒழிந்தது. இன்றே ஸ்திரீ ஜாதிகளாகிய நாங்கள் மனித வகுப்பில் சேர்க்கப்பட்டோம். இனி நாங்கள் ஒரு நிலையான ஸுதந்திரத்தை அடைந்தோம். இனி நாங்கள் பேதமற்ற பாரதப்புதல்வி என உலகில் உலாவுவோம். ஒரு நாட்டின் உயர்வுக்கும், மக்களின் மகிழ்ச்சிக்கும் காரணமாய் இருப்பவர் மாதர்மணிகளே. இனி நம் மக்கள் பண்டைக்காலத்தில் நம் நாட்டில் வாழ்ந்த மாதர்போல் ஒழுக்கத்தில் சிறந்தவராயும், கற்பரசிகளாயும், கல்வியில் தேர்ந்தவர்களாயும், வீரத்தாய்மார்களாகவும், அறம் வளர்த்த அன்னையராயும் இருந்து இந்தியாவானது செழிப்புற்றோங்கக் காலமும் வந்துற்றது. தவிர அடுப்பூதும் வேலைக்கே உரியவரென்று பலராலும் கருதப்பட்ட நம்மாதர் இனிக் கல்வியிலும், நன்னடக்கையிலும், உடல் வன்மையிலும் மிக்கவர்களெனக் கருதப் படும் காலமும்வந்துற்றது. ஆண் மக்களால் அடிமைபோலவும், விலங்கினங்கள் போலவும் நடத்தப்பட்ட நம் அரிவையர் இனி ஆறு அறிவுபெற்ற மாதர்களென மதிக்கப்பட்டனர். ஆனால் வைதீகர்களின் கூச்சல் கடல்போல் ஒலிக்கின்றது. இவர்கள் மத அகம்பாவமும், கர்வமும், வைதீகமமதையும் கொண்டு இது நல்லதென்றும், இது தீமையென்றும், பகுத்தறியும் சக்தியின்றி இந்தியாவின் முன்னேற்றத்திற்கு இவ்வைதீக மதத்தினர் முட்டுக்கட்டை யிடுகின்றனர். தேசாபிமான ஊழியர்கள் ஜனசமூக சீர்திருத்தங்களைப்பற்றி எங்கேனும் ஆரம்பித்தால், ஐயோ மதம்போச்சுது, ஜாதிபோச்சுது என்று கூக்குரலிட்டு கண்மூடித்தனமாக ஆரவாரம் செய்கின்றனர்.

கவர்னர் ஜெனரல் லார்டுவில்லியம் பெண்டிங் சதி என்னும் உடன் கட்டையேறும் மஹாக்கொடு வழக்கத்தை நிறுத்தியதற்கு இந்தியர் என்றும் நன்றிசெலுத்தக் கடமைப்பட்டவர்களென்பதில் சற்றேனும் ஐயமுண்டோ? அப்பொழுதும் நம்வைதீகர் கூக்குரலிட்டனர். அது வீணாயிற்று. கனம் ஹரி விலாஸ் சாரதா அவர்களும் ஸ்ரீமதி முத்துலக்ஷ்மி அம்மாள் அவர்களும் இவ்

விவாக மசோதாவிஷயமாய் எடுத்துக்கொண்ட உழைப்பு நம்மால் எழுதத் திறனன்று. அவர்கள் விடாமுயற்சி நற்பலனை அளித்தது.

இவ்வுத்தமர்களுக்கு எங்கள் மனமார்ந்த வந்தனத்தைச் செலுத்துகிறேன். இம்மசோதாவானது இந்தியச் சட்டசபையில் விவாதத்திறகு வந்தபோது வைதிகர்கள் இம்மசோதாவைத் தோற்கடிக்கத் தத்திக்குதித்துத் தாண்டவமாடினர். ஆனல் நம் பாரத அன்னையின் அருட்கண் நோக்கினுல் நம் ஸாரதா மசோதா வெற்றிபெற்று 67 பேரால் ஜயக்கொடி நாட்டியது. நம் வைதிகர்களின் சார்பாக 14 பேர் வாக்களித்தனர். இதை உற்று நோக்குங்கால் நம் நாட்டினர் இம்மசோதாமீது கொண்டுள்ள அன்பு நன்கு விளங்குகிறது. இந்திய மாதரும் புத்துயிர்பெற்று எழுந்தனர். ஒப்பற்ற பாரத சகோதரிகாள்! இந்தியாவில் பிறந்த ஒவ்வொருவரும் நன்றி செலுத்தக் கடமைப்பட்டுள்ளோம். இதுவரை நாம் இம்மசோதா எப்பொழுது நிறைவேறுமென்றும், நம் அன்னையின் கை விலங்கு என்று அற்றுவிழுமென்றும், தூக்கத்துடன் படுத்துறங்கிய நம் இந்தியத் தாய் என்று துயில் நீங்கி எழுவாள் என்றும், தன் மக்களைக் கண்டு களிகூறுவாளென்றும் எதிர் பார்த்திருந்த நற்காலமும் கிட்டியது. நற்சங்க ஒலியும் த்வனிக்கின்றது. அந்தகாரத்தினின்றும் துன்பத்தினின்றும், நம்மை நீக்கிய இதுவே நன்னுள்.

"மனதிலுறுதிவேண்டும், வாக்கினிலே இனிமைவேண்டும். நினைவு நல்லது வேண்டும், நெருங்கின பொருள் கைப்படவேண்டும், தனமுமின்பமும் வேண்டும், தரணியிலே பெருமைவேண்டும், கண் திறந்திடவேண்டும், காரியத்திலுறுதி வேண்டும், பெண் விடுதலைவேண்டும், பெரிய கடவுள் காக்கவேண்டும், உண்மை நின்றிடவேண்டும்." என்று ஸ்ரீ சுப்பிரமணிய பாரதி கூறியபடி நாம் மனோதைரியத்துடனும், இதவசனம் பேசும் நாவுடனும், எடுத்த நற்காரியத்தைக் கைசோரவிடாது முடிக்கும் ஆற்றலுடனும், ஒரே நிலையான சுயபுத்தியுடனும், நன்மனத்துடனும், பிறர்க்குதவி செய்யும் நோக்கத்துடனும் இருப்போமானல், இத்தரணியில் அடைதற்கரிய நற்கீர்த்தியும் புகழும், தனமும், இன்பமும் தானே வந்து நல்குமென்பதில் தடையில்லை.

விவாகமானது இப்பொழுது நிறைவேறிய சட்டத்தின்படி பையன்களுக்குப் 18 வயதிற்கு மேற்பட்டும், பெண்களுக்கு 14 வயதிற்கு மேற்பட்டும் விவாகம் செய்தல்வேண்டும். சட்டத்திற்கு மாருக நடந்தால், 1000 ரூ. அபராதமும், ஒருமாதச் சிறைவாசமும் ஏற்படும். 1930-ம் வருஷம் ஏப்ரல் மாதம் முதல் இது அமுலுக்குக் கொண்டுவரப்படும். இம்மசோதா ஆதரவுடன் சட்டமாகிவிட்டபடியால் பாலிய விவாகத்திற்குச் சாவு முரசு அறையப்பட்டது. சீர்திருத்தக்காரர் வெற்றிபெற்றனர். மூடப்பழக்க வழக்கங்களுக்குக் காரணபூதமானவைதிகர்களோ முக்காடிட்டு மூலையில் படுத்துறங்குகின்றனர். சீர்திருத்தமே இன்னதென்றறியாத வைதீகர்களுக்கு, இது உபதேசமாகட்டும். இனி இவர்கள் சீர்திருத்த விஷயத்தில் பிரவேசியா திருப்பார்களாக. இனிமேல் பெண் மக்கள்

உயர்நிலை பெறுவார்கள். வரதக்ஷிணை என்ற பிசாசு ஒழிந்தது. விதவைத் தொகை குறைவுறப்போகின்றது. இந்திய சமுதாயத்திற்கே நன்மை ஏற்படப் போகிறது. கூடிய சீக்கிரத்தில் சுயராஜ்யமும் கிட்டப்போகின்றது. இன்னாட்டின் நிலை உயர்ந்தோங்குவதற்கு இன்னும் சமூக சீர்திருத்தச் சட்டங்கள் பல செய்ய வேண்டும். இம்மசோதாவை ஆதரித்த இந்தியச் சட்டசபை மெம்பர்களையும், இதைச் சட்டம்செய்ய அனுமதித்த இந்திய சர்க்காரையும் மனமாரப்போற்றி, வாயாரவாழ்த்தி அவர்களுக்கு அநேக கோடிவந்தனம் செலுத்துகிறோம். தேசத்திற்குத் தக்க தருணத்தில் உதவிசெய்யும் தேசபக்த ஹரிவிலாச சாரதா அவர்களுக்கு இந்தியா என்றும் குன்று நன்றி செலுத்தக் கடமைப்பட்டுள்ளது. சாரதா அவர்களுக்கு ஈசன் தீர்க்க ஆயுளும், திடகாத்திரமும் அளிப்பாராக.

ஸ்ரீமதி எஸ். சேஷம்மாள்.

பண்டைக்காலப் பெண்மணிகள்.

539-ம் பக்கத்தொடர்ச்சி.

இம்மட்டோ! பொது மாதெனப் புகலும் மாதவியின் அரிய செல்வியாகிய மணிமேகலை என்னும் மாதரசியார் துறவின் இச்சையால் வெளியே செல்லுங்கால் எதிர்ப்பட்டு மறித்து தன் அவாவிற் கிணங்குமாறு வற்புறுத்திய உதயணன் என்னும் அரச குமாரனுக்கு அறிவுறுத்திய மணிமேகலையின் அறவுரையினைச் செவ்வனே நோக்குங்கள். இஃதொன்றே நம் வனிதா மணிகளின் கல்விச் சிறப்பை விளக்குவதற்குப் போதிய சான்றன்றோ! நிற்க, இனி கற்புக்கரசியராய்த் திகழ்ந்த நம் தமிழ் நாட்டுப் பெண்மணிகளின் சரிதைகளில் சிலவற்றை எடுத்துக் காட்டுவாம். பெண்களுக்கு விசேடித்த ஆபரணம் யாது? கற்பு நிலையே.

> "பெண்ணிற் பெருந்தக்க யாவுள கற்பென்னுந்
> திண்மை யுண்டாகப் பெறின்"

என்ற தேவர் வாக்கே வலியுறுத்தும் கற்பென்னும் கலங்கா நிலையிருக்கப் பெற்றால் ஒருவன் உலகில் அடைதற்குரிய பொருள்களுள் மனையாளினும் உயர்வாகிய பொருள் யாதிருக்கிறது? பெண்களுக்கு இவையே முக்கிய ஆபரணமென்பது அறிவிக்கவும் வேண்டுமோ! கற்பென்னும் பதத்திற்குப் பொருள் பலவாறு கூறினும், அவற்றுள் "கற்பெனப் படுவது சொற்றிறம் பாமை" என்னும் நம் முதாட்டியாராகிய ஔவையாரின் தெள்ளிய வாக்கே வலியுறுத்தும். அவை ஆண் பெண் என்ற இருபாலார்க்கும் உரிமைப் பொருளாம். நம் சகோதரிகளில், அருந்ததி, அநசூயை என்னும் இவர்களையே எவரும் முதல் முதலாக வழங்குவது வழக்கம். ஆகையால் அன்னவர்களைப் பற்றிச் சிறிது கூறுவாம்.

அருந்ததி.—இவ்வம்மையார் கர்த்தமப் பிரஜாபதியின் அருந்தவப் புத்திரியாய் அவதரித்து அரிய குணங்களால் அலங்கரிக்கப்பெற்று ஸப்த ரிஷிகளில் ஒருவராகிய வசிட்ட முனிவரின் மனைவியராய், கணவனைத் தெய்வமாகப் பாவித்து அவர் சொல்லைக் கடவாது இல்லறம் நடாத்தியவர்களில் இவரே முதன்மையானவர் என்பதை அறியாதார் எவரும் இலரென்றே சொல்லலாம். ஒரு காலத்தில் எல்லாம் வல்ல எம்பெருமானாகிய சிவபெருமானே இவரது கற்பைப் பரிசோதிக்க வேண்டி சுகுமார வடிவந்தாங்கி வந்ததாகவும், இவ்வனிதா ரத்தினம் அக்காலையும் கலங்கா மனமுடையவராய் கன்னியமடைந்தாரென்பது கவனிக்கத் தக்கதே. இம்மட்டோ! இவ் வம்மையார் நீர் கொணர ஆற்றிற்குக் குடங்கொண்டு செல்லுங்கால், ஆங்கு இவரைச் சோதிக்க அக்கினி, இந்திரன், சூரியன் இம் மூவரும் எண்ணங்கொண்டு இவர்களில் இந்திரன் முதல் மூவரும் முறையே அக்குடத்தை

முக்கால்பாகம் நீருள்ளதாகச் செய்யவும், இஃதுணர்ந்த இவ்வம்மை எஞ்சிய கால்பாகத்தைத் தம் கற்பின் மகிமையால் நிரப்பிக்கொண்டு திரும்பியுளார். ஆகவே கற்பின் பெருமையைக் கழறவும் வேண்டுமோ? மற்றுமோர் மகிமை மறக்கத்தக்கதன்று. அஃதாவது அக்கினி தேவனென்பவன் ஸப்த ரிஷிகளின் மனைவியர்களைக் காதலித்தமையை யறிந்த அவர் தம் மனைவியாகிய ஸ்வாஹா தேவி, அந்தந்த ரிஷிபத்தினிகளின் வடிவங்கொண்டு தம் கணவன் ஆசையை அகற்ற வெண்ணி யியற்றுங்கால், எல்லா ருருவத்தையும் ஏற்றும், அருந்ததியாகிய இவ்வம்மையின் உருவத்தை ஏற்க இயலாது வெட்கியதும் பெரிதும் அதிசயிக்கத்தக்கதாக விருக்கின்றதன்றோ! இத்தகைய அருமை பெருமை வாய்ந்த இவ்வம்மையார் இறுதியில் தம் நாயகருடன் நக்ஷத்திர வடிவத்தை யடைந்து, இன்றைக்கும் நாளைக்கும் விவாக காலத்தில் மணமகளுக்கு மணமகன் அவ் அருந்ததி நக்ஷத்திரத்தைக் காண்பித்து அவ்வாறு நீயும் பதிவிரதையாக விளங்குவாயாக என்று கூறுவதற்கு ஓர் இலக்காய் அமைந்துள்ள பெருமையை எவரே உரைத்தற்கியலும்?

அநசூயை.—இவர் அத்திரி முனிவருடைய பாரியை. இவரது கற்பின் திறத்தை அறியும்பொருட்டு நாரதர் ஓர் நாள் அன்னவர் வசிக்கும் ஆசிரமத்தை அணுகி ஆடையின்றித் தமக்கு அன்னமளிக்குமாறு கேட்டபோது அவ்வம்மையார் யாது செய்தனர்? தன் கணவன் கமண்டலு நீரைத் தெளித்த அவ்வளவில் நாரதர் பெண்ணாக மாறித் திருமூர்த்திகளிடம் சென்றும், அவ்வுருவம் நீங்கப் பெறாது மீண்டும் அவ்வம்மையே பழைய வடிவத்தை அளித்தனர். இது குறித்தே,

> கற்புமேய கனங்குழை மாதரைப்
> பெற்றுளோர்த மாபும் பெருந்தவக்
> கற்பினாட் கொண்ட காதல ருருயிர்ச்
> சுற்றம் யாவுந் துறக்கத்தி னெய்துமால்.

என்றனர்.

சாவித்திரி, சந்திரமதி, தமயந்தி, கோப்பெருந்தேவி, சீதை, காரைக்காலம்மையார் முதலிய இன்னோரன்ன பெருமை வாய்ந்த மாதரசிகளின் சரிதங்களை அறியாதாரிலரென்றே கூறலாம். இவற்றுள் சாவித்திரி, தன் நாயகன் உயிரை மீட்டதும், சந்திரமதி அக்கினியில் இறங்கியதும், தமயந்தி வேடனை எறித்ததும், கோப்பெருந்தேவி உயிர் துறந்ததும், ஆஞ்சனேயர் சீதா பிராட்டியாரைக் குறித்து ஸ்ரீராமபிரானிடம் பேசியபோது, "உன் பெருந்தேவி யென்னும் உரிமைக்கும், உன்னைப் பெற்ற மன்பெருமருகி யென்னும் வாய்மைக்கும் மிதிலைமன்னன் தன் பெருந் தனயை யென்னும் தகைமைக்கும் தலைமை சான்றாள்," என்றும், "உன் குலம் உன்னதாக்கி உயர் புகழ்க்கு ஒருத்தியாய தன்குலம் தன்னதாக்கித் தன்னை யித்தகைமை செய்தான் வன்குலம் கூற்றுக் கீய்ந்துவானவர் குலத்தை வாழ்வித்து என்குலம் எனக்குத் தந்தாள்" என்றும் பற்பலவாறு புகழவிருந்த தன்மையும்,

தன் அரும்பெரும் தன்மைகளை அறிந்து அதிசயித்து உடனுறைதற் கஞ்சி வேறோர் விவாகம்செய்து கொண்டதையுணர்ந்த காரைக்காலம்மையார் தம் உருவைமாற்றிக் கடவுளடி சேர்ந்ததும் தங்கள் தங்கள் கற்பின் வன்மையாலன்றோ! இவ்வாறு கற்புநிலையைக் கைக்கொண்டொழுகிப் புகழ்பெற்ற நம் நாட்டில் பண்டைக்காலத்திலிருந்த ஸ்திரீ ரத்தினங்களின் சரிதைகளில் மேலே சொன்னவைகளன்றி அநேகம் உள்ளன. ஆயினும் அவைகளை யெல்லாம் இங்கு கூறப்புகுவதென்றால் மிகையேயாகும். ஆகவே சுருங்கக் கூறுமிடத்து, இத்தகைய அரும்பெரும் தன்மைகளுடன் வாழ்வதற்கு இன்றியமையாத சாதனமாகவுள்ளது கல்வியேயாகும். கல்வியிலார் எத்தகைய சிறப்புடையவராயினும், யாதுபயன் பெறுவர்? “குலமிகவுடையர் குணமிகவுடையர் குறைவில் செல்வமிகவுடையர் நலமிகவுடையர் என்னினும் கல்வி ஞானம் அற்பமுமிலாதவரை வலமிகுதிகிரிச் செங்கையாய் முருக்கின் மணமிலாமலரென மதிப்பேன். சலமிகு புவியில்” என்ற பாண்டவர்களின் இளவலாகிய சகாதேவனின் வாக்கை நோக்குங்கள். மனத்தின் கோணலை ஒழுங்கு படுத்தவல்லது கல்வியே யன்றோ!

நிலத்தின் தன்மை பயிர்க்குள தாகுமால்
நீசத்தொண்டும் மடமையும் கொண்டதாய்
தலத்தின் மிக்குயர் மக்களைப் பெற்றிடல்
சாலவே யறிதாவதோர் செய்தியாம்.

(தொடரும்.)

ஸ்ரீமதி கி. சு. வி. லக்ஷ்மியம்மணி.

விவாகச் சட்டமும் வரதக்ஷிணையும்.

வரதக்ஷிணை யெனும் நோய் ஆங்கிலக் கல்வி கற்றவர்களிடம்தான் உண்டாயிற்று. அவர்கள்தான் B.A. படித்தால் இவ்வளவு பணம் என்பதுபோன்ற திட்டங்களை யேற்படுத்தினார்கள். பிறகு எல்லாருக்கும் அது பரவிற்று. ஆகையினால் வரதக்ஷிணை கூடாது என்னும் நாம், அது கொடுக்கச் சக்தியற்றுப் பெண்களை இளம்வயதில் விவாகஞ்செய்வதில்லை யென்று சொல்லும் சிலரைச் சமூகத்தில் ஏற்படுத்தியதால் நாம் அவர்களுக்குத் நன்றியறிதலைக் காண்பிக்கவேண்டும்.

கலாசாலையில் மேல்நாட்டுப் படிப்புப்படிக்கும் மாணாக்கனோ, அல்லது நாளை மனைவி வீட்டிற்குவந்தால் எப்படி அவளைக் காப்பாற்றுவது என்று எண்ணுதவனோ அர்த்தம் தெரிந்துகொள்ளாமல் உத்க்ருஷ்டமான வேத மந்திரங்களைச் சொல்கிறான். அம்மட்டுமோ? पतिमेकादशं कृधि என்று கணவனையே தன் குழந்தைபோல் பாதுகாக்கவேண்டிய மனைவி, விவாகமெனும் ஆச்சிரமத்துள் புகும்போது தாய்தந்தையர் இரு துவாரபாலகர்போல் சுங்கம்வாங்குவது நியாயமல்ல வென எனக்குத் தோன்றுகிறது.

வரதக்ஷிணையால் விளையுந் துன்பங்களை அடிக்கடி விவரிப்பதிற் பயனில்லை.

மனைவி பர்த்தாவுக்கேற்றவளாயில்லாவிடில் சன்னியாஸம் ஏற்றுக் கொள்ளச் சொன்ன ஔவையார், இப்பொழுதிருந்தால் நான்கு பெண்களைப் பெற்றவனையே சன்னியாசம் ஏற்றுக்கொள்ளச் சொல்வாரென்று நினைக்கிறேன்.

பெண்களைப் பெற்றவர்களும் தங்கள் பெண்களுக்கு வரதக்ஷிணையுடன் விவாகம் கூடாதென்றாலும் பிள்ளைகளுக்கு வாங்குவதிற் குறைவதில்லை.

மற்றும், பணக்காரரும் வாங்குவது கவனிக்கத் தகுந்தது. வரதக்ஷிணை யென்று சொல்வது ரூபாய் வாங்கிப் பெட்டியில் வைத்தாற்றான் என்பது சிலர் எண்ணம். ஆகையாலவர்கள் நகைகளாகவோ வேறு விதமாகவோ அதை வசூலிக்கிறார்கள். பெண்ணின் தகப்பனார் தன் பெண்ணுக்கு வேண்டுமானால் கொடுக்கிறார். இவர்கள் எதற்காக வாங்கவேண்டும்? வாங்கி, பெண்ணிற்காகவாவது பிள்ளைக்காகவாவது கொடுக்கிறார்களா? அநேகர் பழைய கடன்களையெல்லாம் தீர்க்கவே உபயோகிக்கின்றனர்.

இனி சாரதா விவாக மசோதா அமுலுக்கு வந்ததும் வரதக்ஷிணைக்கே நோய் ஏற்படும். இதுவரை ஏதாவது காரணம் கிடைக்காதா என்று காத்திருந்தவர்கள் 14 வயது வரை விவாகமாகாத பெண்ணைக் கொஞ்சம் படிக்க வைத்து விட்டால், இதுவரை 13 என்னும் வயது மீறிவிட்டபடியால் விவாகஞ் செய்யாமலிருக்கத் தைரியம் பிறக்கும்.

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விவாகச் சட்டமும் வரதக்ஷிணையும்

அது வரதக்ஷிணையை யொழிக்க ஒரு மருந்துதான். கொடுங்கோலரசனொருவன் தன் பிரஜைகளைப் பிடித்துப் பொருள் வாங்குவதைக் கேட்டிருக்கின்றோம், எல்லா தேச சரித்திரங்களிலும். ஆனால் ஜன சமூகத்திலேயே, ஒருவர்க்கொருவர், அதிலும் உறவினர், பிடித்து வாங்குவதை இந்தியா தவிர வேறெத் தேசங்களிலும் காணோம்.

சாரதா சட்டம் வந்தபிறகு எல்லாரும் பதினான்கு வயதிற் கல்யாணம் செய்துகொள்ளவேண்டு மென்றதில்லையே. அதனால் பெண்களுக்கு என்ன ஆனாலும் வரதக்ஷிணை கொடுத்து விவாகம் செய்யக்கூடாது. அவளை அடைமானமாகக் கொடுக்கப்பட்ட பிறருடைய சொத்து என்று நினைக்கக்கூடாது.

இவ்விஷயத்தில் சட்டம் பெண்கள் கையிலிருக்கவேண்டும். ஒவ்வொரு தாயும் தன் மகனுக்கு வரதக்ஷிணை வாங்குவதில்லை, தன் மகளுக்குக் கொடுப்பதில்லை யென்று தீர்மானித்துக்கொள்ளவேண்டும். விவாகமாகாத பெண்கள் வரதக்ஷிணை யென்று கொடுத்தால் விவாகம் செய்துகொள்வதில்லை என்றுறுதி கொள்ளவேண்டும்.

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

தன் முயற்சியாலேயே தான் முன்னுக்கு வரவேண்டும். ஆகையால் நீங்களெல்லோரும் நான் ஆமோதிக்கிறபடியே ஆமோதிப்பீர்களென்றும், ஒவ்வொரு கிருகத்திலிருந்தும் வர்தக்ஷிணையை யகற்றுவீர்களென்றும் நம்புகிறேன்.

S. பார்வதி

உயர்தர ஆரம்பவகுப்பு.

TELUGU

స్త్రీల సమావేశములు.

మద్రాసు స్త్రీ విద్యాసంస్కరణ సమావేశము.

నవంబరు 16 వ తేదీని నూతన గవర్నరు స్టాన్లీగారి సతీమణివలన పై సమావేశము చెన్నపట్టణమున ప్రారంభింప బడెను. శ్రీమతి మార్గరెట్టు కజిన్సుగారు యధ్యక్షత వహించిరి. జడ్జి వెంకట సుబ్బరావుగారి సతీమణి యాహ్వాన సంఘ కార్యదర్శినిగా నుండిరి. ఈ సమావేశ సందర్భమున స్త్రీల విద్యావిషయములందు గావలసిన మార్పులు, నవీనమార్గములు మొదలగువానిని గురించి యనేక తీర్మానములు గావించిరి. వీనిని మనచదువరుల యుపయోగార్థమిచట ప్రచురించుచున్నాము. ఇంతియకాక సంఘసంస్కరణ సమావేశ సందర్భమున నిశ్చయింపబడిన తీర్మానములగూడ నిందు ప్రచురించితిమి. ఈ సభాసమావేశమునకు అగ్రాసనాధిపత్యమును వహించిన శ్రీ శ్రీనివాస అయ్యంగారి సతీమణి, శ్రీమతి మాలతి పట్వర్ధనమ్మగారిచే నుపపాదింపబడి, తీర్మానింపబడిన (Divorce)—అనగా చట్టపద్ధతులననుసరించి భార్యాభర్తలు విడియగుట—విషయమగు తీర్మానమునకు తమ యసమ్మతిని దెలుపుచు, సమావేశమధ్యనుండి విరమించిరి. పిదప కజిన్సు సతీమణిగా రగ్రాసనాధిపత్యము నధిష్ఠించిరి. మన చదువరులీ వివిధ తీర్మానముల కియ్యకొనినను, తమకు వీలయినంతవరకైనను, వారికి నమ్మిగల తీర్మానములను ఆచరణలోనికి దెచ్చుటకు కృషిసల్పెదరని ప్రోత్సహించుచున్నాము. ఈ వివిధ తీర్మానముల జదివెడు వారికి, స్త్రీలోకమెట్లు తీవ్రకృషికి సమకట్టినదియు, తమ పరిస్థితుల నెట్లు మార్ప దీక్షవహించినదియు విదితము కాగలదు. ఇదెంతయు శుభసూచకము. వీరి సదుద్దేశ్యముల కార్యసిద్ధికిగాను సర్వేశ్వరుని ప్రార్థింపు చున్నాము.

విద్యా సంస్కరణ సమావేశ తీర్మానములు.

1. మన రాజధానియందలి సమస్త పట్టణములందును, గ్రామములలోను నిర్బంధ ప్రాథమిక విద్యను ప్రారంభింప వలెను. దీనినే మున్ముందు దేశమందంతటను వ్యాపింపజేయవలెను.

2. గ్రామ పాఠశాలలందు విద్యగఱపు ఉపాధ్యాయులకు, తమ పరిస్థితుల పరిచయము గలుగునట్లు ఏర్పాటుల జేయుటేకాక, ప్రతి యుపాధ్యాయుడును కనీసము (Higher elementary) పరీక్షనైన పొంది యుండవలెను.

3. ఉపాధ్యాయినులకు నివాసస్థానములను పాఠశాలలందు స్థాపింప వలెను.

4. ప్రాథమిక విద్య బాలబాలికలు, మహమ్మదీయులను విచక్షతలేక నిర్బంధముగా నొనరింప వలెను.

5. పేదతలిదండ్రులు తమ వేర్వేరు వృత్తులకు వెళ్లునప్పుడు వారి పిల్లల కాపాడుటకును, తగుపరిస్థితుల నేర్పరచుటకును పసివారి గృహముల నిర్మింప వలెను.

6. బాలబాలిక లందరును క్రమముగ పాఠశాలలకు వచ్చుటకును, విద్యాభ్యాసమునకుదగు ఆరోగ్యముగల్గియుండుటకును, పురపాలక సంఘముల వారు బీదపిల్లలకు దినమునకొక పర్యాయము భోజన వసతి నొసంగవలెను.

7. Hook-worm యు, నీటివలన వ్యాధులచేతను నూటికి 75 మంది వ్యాధి గ్రస్తులై యుండుటచేత ప్రాథమిక పాఠశాలల యారోగ్యమునకు తగు నిబంధన లేర్పరచ వలెను.

8. బాలుర పాఠశాలల యందువలెనే, బాలికలకు గూడ పాఠశాలలందు వైద్యపరీక్ష నొనర్పబడ వలెను.

9. ప్రతి బాలికా పాఠశాలయందును, శరీరపరిశ్రమ, వ్యాయామము లకు తగుయేర్పాటులను విద్యా విధానమునందు నెలకొల్ప వలెను.

10. జిల్లా విద్యాసంఘములయందు స్త్రీల విద్యావిధానము విషయమై సరియగు సంస్కరణల నెలకొల్పుటకు స్త్రీ సభ్యులను నియమింప వలెను.

11. బాలికా పాఠశాలలందు గృహనిర్వాహక శాస్త్రము—(Domestie Seience) ను నేర్పవలెను. మఱియు మన వివిధాహార పదార్థముల గుఱించి శాస్త్రి పరిశోధనలు జరుగుటకుగాను, సంఘముల నేర్పరచ వలెను.

12. మహమ్మదీయ బాలికాపాఠశాలలకు ఇన్స్పెక్టర్లుగా మహమ్మదీయ స్త్రీలను నియమింప వలెను.

13. విధివశమున చిన్నవయస్సుననే విద్యాభ్యాసమును వదల వలసిన స్త్రీలకును, బీదసాదలై స్వయంకృషిపై నాధారపడు వారికిని, తగు విద్యాభ్యాసము నొసంగవలెను.

14. విద్యార్థుల పరిస్థితుల ననుసరించి, నూతన మనో శాస్త్రి (Psychology) పద్ధతుల ప్రకారము పుస్తకములు వ్రాయించ వలెను.

15. ప్రైమరీ విద్యాచట్టమును, (Granat-in-aid code) ఆయా సంఘములవారు స్వల్పకృషి సఫలమగునట్లు తగు విధమున మార్పవలెను.

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సంఘ సంస్కరణ సమావేశ తీర్మానములు.

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1. హారవిలాస్ శారదాగారి బాల్య వివాహచట్టమునకుగాను వారికిని చట్టము నెలకొల్పుటకు దోడ్పడిన దొరతనమువారికిని, మిత్రులకును కృతజ్ఞతను దెలిపిరి.

2. బాల్యమునందే పిల్లలతల్లులగునట్లు బాలికల జేయు యాచారముల నిరసించుచు, బాలికలను 16 వర్షములును బాలురకు 21 సంవత్సరములునువచ్చు వరకును వివాహమాడకుండునట్లు తమ సంస్కరణమును మార్చుటకుగాను హరిసింగ్ గారుగారిని వేడుకొనిరి.

3. బాల్యవివాహచట్టమును ఆచరణలోనికి దెచ్చుటకుగాను దొరతనమువారు జననములను, వివాహములను రిజష్టరు జేయునట్లు నిర్బంధ చట్టము

నొనర్పవలెననియు, స్త్రీలు తమతమ గ్రామములందు ఈచట్టము సరిగా నాచరణకు వచ్చునట్లు, మెళుకువ సంఘముల " (Vigilance committees) నేర్పర్చవలెననియు కోరిరి.

4. పెండ్లికుమారులను కొనుపద్ధతిని నిరసించిరి.

5. దేశౌన్నత్యమునకుగాను, దొరతనమువారు అగత్యముగ గర్భిణి స్త్రీల సంరక్షణకుగాను అనువర్తించు చట్టముల ప్రతిపాదింప వలెను. సంస్థల నేర్పరచ వలెను.

6. హిందూ, మహమ్మదీయ స్త్రీలు ఘోషా ఆచారమును విడువ వలెను. (కొందరు మహమ్మదీయ స్త్రీలు దీనికి తమ యసమ్మతిని చెప్పిరి.)

7. స్త్రీ పురుషులకు సమాన సాంఘిక హక్కులీయ బడవలెను. వివాహము, బిడ్డల పెంచుకొనుట, బిడ్డలపై యధికారపు హక్కు (Guardianship) పిత్రార్జితపు ఆస్తిహక్కులును, స్త్రీపురుషులకు సరిసమానముగా నుండవలెను.

8. స్త్రీలకు, పురుషులకువలెనే, వివాహబంధనమునుండి విడిపించుకొనుటకు (Divorce) సమానహక్కును గలుగజేయవలెను.

9. దొరతనమువారును, హిందూమత దేవాలయ సంఘముల వారును, దేవాలయ పాలక సంఘములవారును, బాలికలను, స్త్రీలను దేవాలయములలో దేవదాసినులుగా నొనర్చు యాచారమును నిర్మూలనం బొనర్పవలెను. దీని విషయమై శ్రీమతి ముత్తులక్ష్మిరెడ్డిగారివలన ప్రతిపాదింపబడిన దేవదాసీల చట్టమునకు తమ సానుభూతిని చెప్పి దానికి దోడ్పడ తీర్మానించిరి.

10. దొరతనమువారును, వివిధ రాజధానుల పురపాలక సంఘములును, పడుపువృత్తి నిర్మూలనమునకుగాను ప్రతిపాదింపబడిన బిల్లును శీఘ్రముగ చట్టముగా నొనర్పవలెననియు, బాలికలకు 21 వ సంవత్సరమువరకును మద్రాసు బోర్డులు పాఠశాల పద్ధతుల ప్రకారము విద్యనొసంగవలసినదిగను తీర్మానించిరి.

11. మద్రాసు దొరతనమువారును, అఖిల భారత దొరతనమువారును నవనాగరికతగల ఇతర రాజధానులు - దేశములందువలె, పసిబిడ్డలు, బాలికల సంరక్షణకు, మద్రాసు పసిపిల్లల చట్టమును దగురీతిని మార్పవలెను. మరియు

మద్రాసు పసిపిల్లల సహాయక సంఘమునకును, తదితర పాఠశాలలకును దొరతనము వారు తగు ద్రవ్య సహాయమొసంగవలెను. పసిబిడ్డలకు ప్రత్యేక కోర్టు నేర్పరచి, బాలికల నివాసస్థలముల పరీక్షించుటకుగాను తగు విద్యావంతులగు స్త్రీల నియమింప వలెను.

12. వంగ దేశమునందలి సరోజనళినీ దత్తు సంఘములవంటి వానిని ప్రతి గ్రామమునందును స్థాపించుటకు సోదరీమణుల హెచ్చరింపుచు, ప్రస్తుతము పని జేయుచున్న వివిధ స్త్రీ సంఘములవారును స్త్రీలకు వివిధవృత్తులను, విద్యలను గఱపుటకు తగుయేర్పాటుల గావించవలెనని కోరిరి. మద్రాసునందు సంఘసేవకొరకు కొందరి స్త్రీల చేర్చియొక సంఘము నేర్పరచి, పై జెప్పినట్టి సత్కృషి వివిధ గ్రామముల వ్యాపించునట్లు తమ సోదరీమణులకు దగుసహాయము నిచ్చునట్లును తీర్మానించిరి.

మఱియు ప్రతిసోదరీమణియు సంఘసంబంధమగు తన బాధ్యతను గ్రహించి బిడ్డతల్లుల చికిత్సాలయములు, పసివారి గృహములు, వివిధ చికిత్సాలయములు, కారాగృహములు, దీనశరణాలయములు, మొదలగు వానియందు విద్యావ్యాపనమును, పడుపు గృహముల నిర్మూలనము (Girl guiding) మొదలగు వానియందును తప్పక పాల్గొనవలెనని హెచ్చరించుచున్నారు.

13. అంటరానితనమును నిర్మూలనము జేయుటకు తగు ప్రయత్నములను స్త్రీలు జేయవలెను. చికిత్సాలయములు, మంచి నీటి నూతులు, రహదారులు, దేవాలయములు, పుస్తకాలయములు, సత్రములు మొదలగునవి యందరికిని జాతి విచక్షత లేక తగుయందుబాటునందుండు నట్లొనర్పవలెను.

14. కర్మాగారములలో 14 వర్షములకు దక్కువగువారి నుపయోగింప రాదు. పసివారికిని, బిడ్డతల్లులకును తక్కువకాలము పని జేయ నేర్పరచ వలెను. కర్మాగారములలో పని జేయువారి బిడ్డల సంరక్షణకు తగు గృహముల నేర్పరచ వలెను.

15. ప్రజలు త్రాగుడు తనమును నిర్మూలించుటకు జేయు ప్రయత్నముల శ్లాఘించుచు, దొరతనమువారును, ప్రజలును ఇట్టి దురాచారమును నిర్మూలించుటకు ప్రయత్నింపవలెనని కోరిరి.

16. ప్రతియొక్క యెన్నికసందర్భమునను, వివిధ స్త్రీ సంఘముల వారును స్త్రీ ప్రతినిధుల నెలకొల్పుటకు ప్రయత్నింపవలెను.

17. దొరతనమువారిని, శాసనసభలు, పురపాలక సంఘములు, జిల్లా సంఘములు మొదలగు వానికి తగినంతమంది స్త్రీ సభ్యుల నియమింపవలెనని కోరిరి.

18. దేశపు భవిష్యదౌన్నత్యము స్త్రీలహస్తగతమైయుండబట్టి వివిధ దేశములవారును, ముఖ్యముగ హిందూదేశపు దొరతనమువారును యుద్ధమును నిర్మూలించి, సంఘీభావమును నెలకొల్పి శాంతిని సమకూర్చవలెనని గట్టిగ కోరుచున్నారు.

ఆంధ్ర మహిళాసభ-బెజవాడ

శ్రీమతి తుర్లపాటి రాజరాజేశ్వరమ్మగారి యుపన్యాసము. 3-11-1929.

సోదరీమణులారా; ప్రతినిధులారా!

ఆంధ్రదేశముయొక్క వివిధప్రాంతములనుండి స్త్రీజాతియొక్క అభివృద్ధియే మదియందిడుకొని కడువ్యయప్రయాసలకోర్చి ఈ మహాసభలకు విచ్చేసిన సుప్రసిద్ధులగు నారీమణులకందరకును మా విజయవాడ పుర స్త్రీలపక్షమునను, ఆహ్వాన సంఘమువారి పక్షమునను హృదయపూర్వకముగు స్వాగత మొసంగుచున్నాను. మా యాతిథ్యములో చాల లోటులుగలవు. మా యేర్పాటులు మిగుల అసంతృప్తికరముగానున్నవి. మీకు సౌకర్యములు మేము సరిగా చేయజాలక పోతిమని నాకు తెలుసును. కాని మీయందలి గౌరవముతోను ప్రేమతోను మా హృదయములు నిండియున్నవి. కావున మా యుద్దేశ్యములను మాత్రమే మీరు గ్రహించి మా లోపములనన్నిటిని సోదరీవాత్సల్యముతో మన్నించి చరిత్రాత్మకమును పావనమునైన విజయవాడ పుర స్త్రీలొసంగు స్వాగతమును దయతో గైకొనవలెనని సవినయముగా వేడుచున్నాను.

మన మాతృభూమియగు భరతవర్షము నేడు పరాధీనతనుండి తప్పించుకొని స్వతంత్రమును పొందవలెనని తీవ్రమగు ప్రయత్నములు చేయుచున్నది. తత్క్షణము సంపూర్ణమగు డొమినియను స్టేటసు అన్నిపక్షములవారిచేతను వాంఛింపబడుచున్నది. సైమనుకమిషను బహిష్కరింప బడినది. ఆబహిష్కారప్రయత్నములో పంజాబు కేసరి, స్త్రీలపాలిటి కల్పతరువు, దేశబాంధవుడునగు లాలాలజపతిరాయి లాటిదెబ్బలచే మరణించెను. ఏమూల చూచినను నిర్బంధవిధానములు సంపూర్ణముగా సాగింప బడుచున్నవి. పెక్కుమంది నాయకులు యువకులు ప్రభుత్వమువారి చెరసాలలో నున్నారు. రాజకీయఖైదీల సౌకర్యములకొరకు యువకుడును, ధీరుడునునగు జతీంద్రుడు లాహోరుజైలులో తన ప్రాణములను సమర్పించినాడు. అతని మృతకళేబరమునకు జరిగిన గౌరవము ఏ రాజాధిరాజులకును జరుగలేదు. ఆంగ్లేయపార్లమెంటులో స్వలాభాపేక్షపరులగు ధనికులు భూఖామందుల పార్టి (కన్సర్వేటివ్) పడిపోయి ఉదారస్వభావులగు కార్మికపక్షము అధికారమునకు వచ్చియున్నది. గవర్నరుజనరలుగారు ఇంగ్లాడునకుపోయి నూతనమంత్రివర్గముతో సంప్రదించి మరల వచ్చియున్నారు. ఇంగ్లాండు గవర్నమెంటువారు హిందూదేశీయ నాయకుల సమావేశమొకటి పిలచి హిందూదేశ రాజకీయ సమస్యలను పరిష్కరింతురను వదంతులు వ్యాపించియున్నవి. కొద్దినెలలలో గొప్ప రాకీయసంస్కరణలు వచ్చునని భారతీయులు ఎదురుచూచుచున్నారు. రెండురోజులకుపూర్వము వైస్రాయి ఇర్విను ప్రభువుగారు హిందూదేశీయులకు సందేశమునంపి దేశనాయకుల సమావేశము నేర్పాటుజేయ సంకల్పమును వ్యక్తపరచియుండిరి. సత్వర అధినివేశస్వాతంత్ర్య మయినను హిందూదేశమున కివ్వకుండుట కడు అసంతృప్తికరము. అయినను సర్వపక్షనాయక సమావేశము సమకూర్పనుండుట శుభదాయకము. ఈ సమావేశఫలితముగ స్వరాజ్యప్రాప్తిగలుగుగాత.

ఇంకను రెండు నెలలలోపల భారతదేశీయ మహాజనసభ లాహోరులో సమావేశమై భరతవర్షము స్వరాజ్యము పొందుటకు చేయవలసిన కార్యక్రమమును నిర్ణయించ నున్నది. ఇట్టి ముఖ్యమగు సందిగ్ధతరుణములో పురుషులతో పాటు దేశస్వాతంత్ర్యమును సంపాదించు ఉద్యమములలో స్త్రీలుకూడ పాల్గొనుటచాల ముఖ్య

మని, అవసరమని మనవిచేయుచున్నాను. పూర్వకాలమున మన దేశమున స్త్రీలు ఎటుల పురుషులకు దేశీయ పోరాటములలో సహాయపడినది, మనచరిత్రలు ఘోషించుచున్నవి. ధర్మసంస్థాపనలో శ్రీరామునితో కూడ సీత ఎటులకష్టపడినది, నరకాసురసంహారములో సత్యభామ యెటుల కృష్ణునకు సహాయముచేసినది మనకు తెలుసును. చిత్తూరుముట్టడి, బొబ్బిలియుద్ధము మొదలగువాటిలో స్త్రీలు యెంతధీరులుగ ప్రవర్తించినది, ఎట్టి త్యాగములు చేసినది మన మెరుంగుదుము. ఝాన్సీరాణి వీరచరిత్రను మనమింకను మరువలేదు. ఈ కాలమున జపాను, చైనా, టర్కీ, ఈజిప్టు దేశములు సల్పిన స్వతంత్రపోరాటములలో ఆయా దేశపు స్త్రీలు పురుషులతోపాటు చాలశ్రమచేసినట్లు మనకు చరిత్రలవలన తెలియుచున్నది. కొంతవరకు పంజాబులోను బంగాళములోను స్త్రీలు ముందంజ వేయుచున్నటుల పత్రికలలో చదువుచున్నాము. ఆంధ్రదేశపు స్త్రీలుకూడ దేశస్వాతంత్ర్యయుద్యమములో కృషిసల్పుదురుగాక యనికోరుచున్నాను.

ఈ సంవత్సరము వేసంగిలో పురుషోత్తముడును దీనబాంధవుడునగు మహాత్మా గాంధిగారు ఆంధ్రదేశములో సంచారము చేసినప్పుడు ఆంధ్ర స్త్రీలుకూడ మిగుల యుత్సాహముతో శ్రీవారికి స్వాగతమిచ్చి వారిసంచారమును జయప్రదముగ నొనర్చియున్నారు. శ్రీవారికి మిగుల ప్రేమాస్పదములగు ఖద్దరును పంచముల అస్పృస్యతా నివారణమును ఆంధ్రదేశ స్త్రీలు కొనసాగింతురుగాకయని కోరుచున్నాను. మనమందరమును దేశీయ వస్త్రములు దేశీయవస్తువులయందు ప్రేమను వృద్ధిచేసికొనవలసియున్నది. దీనిమూలమున తిండిలేనివారికి తిండియు కట్టుటకు గుడ్డలేనివారికి గుడ్డయు లభింపగలవు.

దేశము స్వతంత్రమును పొందయత్నించుచున్న యీ సమయములో స్త్రీలకు కొంత స్వేచ్ఛస్వతంత్రమును కలుగచేసి స్త్రీలను శరీరబలహీనతనుండియు బాల్యవైధవ్యమునుండియు కాపాడగల శారదా బిల్లు చట్టమగుట మిగుల శుభావహము. బాల్యవివాహములవలన గలుగుచున్న అనర్థకములు అందరికి తెలిసినవే. ఈ శాసనము పూర్వాచార పరాయణులగు బ్రాహ్మణులకును, వైశ్యులకును మనస్సుకు కొంతకష్టమును ఇచ్చుచుండుట వాస్తవమేకాని కొలది కాలములో దేశము యీ శాసనమున కలవడగలదు. బాల్యవివాహములుకూడ

దూపుమాసి పోగలవని విశ్వసించుచున్నాను. శ్రీ శారదాగారికి స్త్రీలోకము కృతజ్ఞత జూపుచున్నది.

మన దేశములో స్త్రీవిద్య మిగుల అధోగతియందున్నదని యీమధ్య సంచారముచేసి రిపోర్టు వ్రాసిన హార్టాగ్ కమిటీవారును అంగీకరించి యున్నారు. స్త్రీలలో విద్య ఇంక ననేకరెట్లు వృద్ధిచెందినగాని దేశమునకు మోక్షములేదు. ఆంధ్రదేశము స్త్రీవిద్యలో తోటిరాష్ట్రములగు మహారాష్ట్రముకన్నను బంగాళముకన్నను దక్షిణ చెన్నరాష్ట్రముకన్నను చాల వెనుకబడియున్నది. మహారాష్ట్రము దేశములో ప్రొఫెసరు కార్వేగారు ఇరువై అయిదులక్షలు సంపాదించి (Indian Women's University) హైందవ స్త్రీల విశ్వవిద్యాలయమును స్థాపించియున్నారు. అనేక ఉన్నత పాఠశాలలను కూడ పెట్టించియున్నారు. అవివాహితలగు యువతులు హైస్కూళ్లలో చదువుకొనుచుండుట మహారాష్ట్ర దేశములో ఆచారమై పోయినది. మద్రాసులో (Queen Mary's College) క్వీను మేరీసు స్త్రీల కళాశాలను పెట్టియు, దానికి జతగా ఒక హాస్టలు పెట్టియు, విద్యార్థినులకు వసతి గృహమును పెట్టియు, గవర్నమెంటువారు కొంత మేలుచేసియున్నారు. కొద్ది కొద్దిగా అచ్చటచ్చట బాలికలకు ఉన్నతవిద్య నియ్యగల పాఠశాలలనుకూడ ప్రభుత్వమువారు పెట్టుచున్నారు. ఇంకను యివి చాల తక్కువగా నున్నవి. సరిపోవనికూడ మనవి చేయుచున్నాను. బెజవాడ వంటి బస్తీలో హైస్కూలు లేదు. ఇటువంటి ప్రతి బస్తీలోను ఒక హైస్కూలునున్నూ, ఆంధ్రదేశమున కుపకరించుటకు కేంద్రస్థానమగు బెజవాడయందొక స్త్రీల (College) కళాశాలనున్నూ స్థాపించవలెనని ప్రభుత్వమును కోరవలసియున్నది. మరియు వివాహితులగు స్త్రీలకును, యితరులకును గూడ విశ్రాంతి సమయములలో విద్యనొసంగగల విద్యా సంస్థలకొరకు మనము కృషిసలుపవలసియున్నది. కాని స్త్రీ విద్యావిధానమును గూర్చి యిచ్చట ఒక్క మాట చెప్పవలసియున్నది. స్త్రీలకు ప్రభుత్వబడులలోను, హైస్కూళ్లలోను, కళాశాలలలోను గరపు విద్య లాభకారిగా లేదు. పురుషులకు కావలసిన విద్యా పద్ధతులన్నియు స్త్రీల కక్కరలేదు. పురుషులు విద్యను పొట్టకూటికిని, ఉద్యోగముల కొరకును నేర్చుకొనుచున్నారు. స్త్రీలు జ్ఞానార్జనము కొరకు మాత్రమే విద్య నేర్చుకొనెదరు. ఉద్యోగములు సాధారణముగా స్త్రీల

కక్కరలేదు. నీతిని, దైవభక్తిని వృద్ధిచేసి స్త్రీలు మంచి తల్లులుగను, గృహిణులుగను, వీరమాతలుగను విలసిల్లుటకు కావలసిన విద్య ముఖ్యముగ స్త్రీలకు కావలసియున్నది. ఈ విషయములో మద్రాసు శాసనసభలో మనకు ప్రతినిధిగా పనిచేయుచున్న శ్రీమతి మన అధ్యక్షురాలుగారు ఎక్కువ శ్రద్ధవహించి స్త్రీల యొక్క విద్యావిధానమును తగు రీతిని మార్పింతురనియు, స్త్రీలకు విద్యాధికారిగ హైందవ స్త్రీయే యుండునట్లు ఏర్పాటుగావింతురనియు విశ్వసించుచున్నాను. దీనినిబట్టి పురుషులతోపాటు స్త్రీలకును శాస్త్ర విద్యలు మొదలగునవి అక్కరలేదని నా అభిప్రాయము గాదు.

ముఖ్యముగా స్త్రీలకు కావలసిన అవసరములలో స్త్రీలయొక్క ఆర్థికస్థితి చక్కపరచుట చాల ముఖ్యము. ప్రస్తుతము హిందూ ధర్మశాస్త్ర ప్రకారము స్త్రీలస్థితి మిగుల హీనముగనున్నది. జాయింటు కుటుంబములో భర్త చనిపోగానే ఆ యాస్తియంతయు భర్తయొక్క అన్నదమ్ములకు చెంది వితంతువు భరణమునకు మాత్రమే అర్హురాలగుచున్నది. భరణము పొందుటలో స్త్రీలుపడు కష్టములు వర్ణనాతీతములు. భర్తయొక్క యావత్తుభాగమును జాయింటు కుటుంబములో కూడ భార్యకుచెందుట న్యాయము ధర్మము అయియున్నది. మరియు తండ్రియొక్క ఆస్తిలో కుమాళ్లతోపాటు కూతుళ్ళకుకూడ భాగములు పంచియిచ్చుట అవసరమైయున్నది. కుమాళ్లు మనుమలు ఉన్నప్పటికిని కొంత భాగము భార్యకు సంక్రమింపచేయుటయు అవసరము. ఇట్టియేర్పాటు మహమ్మదీయులలో కలదని తెలియుచున్నది. స్త్రీలకు అర్థికస్థితినియిచ్చు ఇట్టి హిందూలా సవరణలు శాసనసభలలో తెచ్చుటకై మనము మిగుల కృషిసలుపవలసి యున్నది. ఇది చాల అవసరమని మనవిచేయుచున్నాను. ఈ విషయమయి తీవ్రమైన ఆందోళన ప్రారంభింపవలసి యున్నది.

మున్సిపాలిటీలు, లోకలుబోర్డుల చట్టములు మారబోవుచున్నవి. నామినేషనులు రద్దుచేయబోవుచున్నారు. మంచిదే! వాటిలో స్త్రీలకు కొన్ని స్థానములు యెన్నికలలో ప్రత్యేకించవలెనని మనము కోరవలసియున్నది. అటులనే రాబోవు రాజకీయ సంస్కరణములలో శాసనసభలలోకూడ ఎన్నికలలో స్త్రీలకు కొన్నిస్థానములు ప్రత్యేకించవలెనని మనము కోరవలసియున్నది.

ఆచారమువలన పతితులుగా చేయబడిన దేవదాసీకులమును మరల పవిత్రపరిచి ఉద్ధరించుటకుగాను మన అధ్యక్షురాలు చాల ప్రయత్నముచేయుచుండుట మీకు తెలిసిన విషయమే. దేవదాసీల చట్టమును మద్రాసు శాసనసభలోగావించి దేవాలయములనుంచి పతితులగు వ్యభిచారిణులు దూరముగనుండునట్లు వీరు చేసియున్నారు. దేవాలయములకు దేవదాసీనవుకరీ యీనాము లుండుటవలన ఆకులములోని బాలికలచేత నిర్బంధముగా భోగపుమేళపు నౌకరీ చేయించవలసి వచ్చుచున్నది. అందువలన ఆబాలికలు నిర్బంధముగా వ్యభిచారిణులుగ చేయబడుచున్నారు. ఇప్పుడీచట్టమువలన ఇనాములకు క్విటురెంటుకట్టి యివ్వబడినవి. నౌకరీచేయవలసిన అవసరము లేదు. అక్విటురెంటు దేవాలయమునకు చెందును. ఇందువలన నిర్బంధముగ భోగము మేళపు నౌకరీ చేయవలసిన బాధ్యతపోయినది. ఆకులస్త్రీలుకూడా వ్యభిచారవృత్తివదలి చక్కగా వివాహములాడి ఆత్మగౌరవము గల పౌరులయి ఇతర కులములతోపాటు అభివృద్ధి చెందెదరుగాక యని పరమేశ్వరుని ప్రార్థించుచున్నాను. ఈ కులోద్ధారణకొరకు శ్రీమతి యామినీపూర్ణతిలకమ్మగారు చేయుచున్న కృషి ప్రశంసాపాత్రముగా నున్నది.

పేదవారును దౌర్భాగ్యులునునగు చిన్నబాలికలను పడుపువృత్తిలో దింపుటకు కొన్ని సంఘములు, కొన్ని గృహములు యేర్పడి గొప్ప పట్టణములలో సంఘమర్యాదను తారుమారు చేయుచున్నవి. వాటిని నిర్మూలముగావించి చిన్న బాలికలను దుష్టమగు వ్యభిచారవృత్తినుండి సంరక్షించుటకు (Brothel's Bill) పడుపుగృహముల చట్టము మద్రాసు శాసనసభయెదుట నున్నది. దానికొరకు మన అధ్యక్షురాలు మిగుల శ్రమపడుచున్నారు. ఆ చట్టమును వెంటనే మంజూరు చేయించుటలో మనము మన అధ్యక్షురాలికి తోడ్పడవలసియున్నది. ఈ సమస్య రూపుమాపుటకు మనమునూ ప్రత్యేక సంఘములను నిర్మాణము చేయవలయును.

ఇంక నెన్నియో స్త్రీలను గూర్చిన సమస్యలు గలవు. మిగుల కించిజ్ఞురాలనగు నేను వాటినిగూర్చి ముచ్చటించుట సాహసము. ఈ మహాసభకు ద్రావిడ నారీమణియయ్యునూ సుప్రసిద్ధ ఆంధ్ర డాక్టరును పెండ్లియాడుటవలన ఆంధ్రనారీమణియై యం. బి. సి. యమ్. పరీక్షలో ఆరితేరి సుప్రసిద్ధ విద్వాంసురాలయి వైద్యురాలయి వైద్యమునకును, సుగుణ సంపదకును ప్రసిద్ధి చెంది యూరపుఖండ

ములలో సంచారము చేసివచ్చి మద్రాసు శాసనసభకు ఉపాధ్యక్షురాలయి స్త్రీల యొక్క అభివృద్ధికొరకే సతతము పనిచేయుచున్న సుప్రసిద్ధ సోదరీమణియగు శ్రీమతి ముత్తులక్ష్మిరెడ్డిగారిని అధ్యక్షురాలుగా నుండగలందులకు మీ యందరిపక్షమున కోరుచున్నాను. మీరు శ్రమకోర్చి యీ సభ నలంకరించినందులకు మీ కందరికి వందనము లర్పించుచున్నాను.

వివిధ విషయములు.

ఉత్తర తిరువాన్కూరునందలి ఐశ్వర్య వంతులగు కొందరు నంబూదిరి స్త్రీలు తమ ఘోషాను పరిత్యజించి నిరాటంకముగనుండు నవీన దుస్తులను ధరించుటయు, విహారార్థము ప్రజలకు కట్టబడిన ప్రదేశముల కేగుటయు, నాటకప్రదర్శనముల వీక్షించుటయు ప్రారంభించిరి. వీరిలో కొందరు, యువరాణిగారిని దర్శించగా వారు నంబూదిరి స్త్రీలు ఘోషాను పరిత్యజించుటేకాక తమ బాలికలను పాఠశాలలకు పంపించవలసినదిగా సలహా నొసంగిరి.

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బీహారు శాసనసభలో స్త్రీలు సభ్యులుగ నెన్నుకొనబడుటకు యవకాశ మొసంగవలసినదిగా నొక చట్టమును రాయిబహద్దర్ శరత్ చంద్రరాయిగారు ప్రవేశబెట్ట నుద్యమించుచున్నారు. పురుషులు, సంఘాభివృద్ధికి స్త్రీల యావశ్యకతను గుర్తెఱుగుచున్నారనుట కివి శుభసూచకములుగదా !

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హైదరాబాదు శ్రీనైజాముగారి శాసనసభ్యులగు శ్రీ రాయ్ బహద్దర్ విశ్వేశ్వరనాథ్ వ్యాగాగారు, "సమాజము" తరఫున ప్రసంగించుచు శ్రీ శారదాగారి బాల్యవివాహపు చట్టమును సంస్తుతించిరి. వీరు శ్రీ నైజాము దొరతనము వారు తమ రాజ్యమునందుకూడ నిట్టి చట్టమునే నెలకొల్పుటకుగాను "వ్యాగ్రే బాల్య వివాహ నిర్బంధన" చట్టమును ప్రతిపాదించెదమని వ్రాక్కిచ్చిరి. ఇదెంతేయు శుభవార్త. వీరి ప్రయత్నములు సఫలమగునని గట్టిగ నమ్ముచున్నాము.

ఆంగ్ల కార్మికసంఘమువారు పరిపాలనకువచ్చినపిదప, నీ సంఘము వారిలో ప్రముఖులగు శ్రీ సిడ్నీవెబ్బుగారికి లార్డు పాస్‌ఫీల్డు గౌరవనామమునిచ్చిరి. వీరి

సతీమణిగారు తాము తమ పురాతన నామమును మాత్రమే యుంచుకొని లార్డు పాన్ ఫీల్డుగారి సతీమణియను నామమును నిరాకరించిరి. ఏలననగా వీరిభర్తకీయబడిన యీ బిరుదు వీరి కేవిధమునను నిజముగా ననువర్తించదు. వీరు పార్లమెంటు పై సభకు నెన్నుకొనబడుటకు నర్హత లేదు. కార్మిక సంఘమందుండి మిగుల ప్రఖ్యాతిగాంచిన యీయామె తన ప్రథమనామమే, ప్రస్తుత మీయబడిన యర్థవిహీనమై, కేవలము ఆడంబర నామముకన్న, శ్రేయస్కరమని యెంచుట వీరి నమ్రతను జాటుచున్నది.

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